

BRITISH  
FOREIGN POLICY  
IN THE  
SECOND WORLD WAR

BY  
SIR LLEWELLYN WOODWARD

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## PREFACE

THIS History—an abridgement of a larger work written for official reference—is a record compiled from British archives. In order to avoid the distortion of ‘after-knowledge’ I have limited myself generally to these archives, that is to say, I have not introduced information about Allied or enemy policy which is now available but was unknown at the time to British ministers or officials. On the other hand I have had the advantage of shewing my manuscript to many of the writers of the documents which I have used, and I am most grateful to them for their comments. I cannot thank by name all who have assisted me in finding and assembling material or in checking my text, but I should like to mention, in particular, the late Mr. A. B. Acheson, of the Historical Section of the Cabinet Office, and Mr. C. H. Fone, of the Foreign Office Library, and also to say how great a debt I owe to Miss A. W. Orde for most valuable help in the final stages of writing.

It would be absurd, and graceless, if I did not say how much I have learned from Sir Winston Churchill’s own account of his Administration. Sir Winston, on the principle *quia nominor leo*, has rightly allowed himself a personal approach and a freedom of comment from which an official historian is debarred. The six volumes of *The Second World War* cover the main issues of diplomacy—and especially of Anglo-American relations—as well as of battle. A student following only one aspect of war activity through the maze of documents in the archives, finds himself again and again admiring the political insight, fairmindedness, and not least the generosity which Sir Winston Churchill has brought to the story as a whole.

I have kept as close as possible to the wording of the documents in the archives, though inevitably I have had to do a great deal of compression. From the point of view of historical composition this kind of large-scale précis work has its difficulties. The use of *oratio obliqua* soon becomes wearisome and the clichés of diplomacy are as unattractive as any other form of circumlocution. Hence I have gladly followed the informality of many documents in using the words ‘we’ and ‘us’ rather than the official designation ‘His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom’. I have also written that ‘the Foreign Office’ ‘thought’, ‘proposed’, ‘disagreed’ and the like. Such terms may not stand up to exact analysis, but everyone knows what they mean.

LLEWELLYN WOODWARD

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## INTRODUCTION

THE prime function of the Foreign Office and the British Missions abroad—collectively, in their modern organisation, the Foreign Service—is to advise the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and to carry out his instructions on matters affecting the relations between Great Britain and other countries, and to act as a channel of communication and report between the Governments of those countries and that of the United Kingdom. The Foreign Secretary is not a senior official among other officials. As a Minister of the Crown he ‘represents in his own person the powers of the Parliamentary majority of the day in the domain of foreign affairs’.<sup>1</sup> Within his Department he carries out his work by methods different in many respects from those of his predecessors even sixty years ago. During the nineteenth century the Department did not lack permanent officials of high ability who exercised a very considerable influence on the determination of policy. The staff in general, however, had little more than routine duties.<sup>2</sup> To-day the permanent officials are a large body of expert advisers, and the arrangement of business ensures the presentation of their advice in a convenient and expeditious form.

It would be a mistake to regard these changes as ‘depersonalising’ the Secretary of State or putting him, as it were, into committee. The Secretary of State has lost none of his overriding responsibility. He need not and often does not follow the advice of his experts. He has the final word in every decision within the Department as well as the task of convincing his colleagues in the Cabinet, and a majority in Parliament, of the rightness of his policy. He must therefore be a master of the art of choosing priorities, and must trust his advisers to deal with many subjects on lines to which he has given broad approval. He is, incidentally, much handicapped if he is not a rapid reader of papers, but a great deal of his work is done orally, and the record of it may be found only in an outgoing despatch or

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Strang, *The Foreign Office* (London, 1955), p. 152. This book gives an excellent description of the working of the Foreign Office, and of the Foreign Service as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> The staff was small by modern standards. As late as 1914 the Foreign Office employed only 176 people, including doorkeepers, cleaners, etc. The membership of the Diplomatic and Consular Services was just under 450, of whom about a third were “career” diplomats. In 1953-4 there were over 2600 members of the Foreign Service above the “messengerial grades”. Strang, *id.*, pp. 30 and 56-7.

telegram. A historian should thus be on guard against losing sight of the central fact of ministerial responsibility in the mass of departmental material which gathers round almost every question. It is, for example, a good rule to remember that the most lavishly documented subjects are not always the most important, and that the few verbal changes suggested by the Secretary of State in a draft submitted to him may be the most important words in the document.

With this caution one may notice also that the sphere of activities of the Department has widened in the course of time. The services of the experts may be sought outside their own technical field of diplomacy. During the war the Foreign Office and the Missions abroad were used not only to carry out negotiations with Allied and neutral States (neutrality, once a plain term, like black or white, had acquired all manner of subtle shades). They were consulted about the probable political consequences of military action or of moves in what was known as 'economic warfare'. They were also asked to consider, and in some cases, to correct the unforeseen results of decisions taken by other Departments. Thus in the winter of 1939-40 one such decision cut off the import of American apples in order to save dollars, and another decision announced a large-scale purchase of tobacco from south-east Europe. American fruit producers objected to the first of these measures, and American tobacco producers to the second of them. The Department of State in Washington pointed out to the British Ambassador the political importance of the complaints, and the Foreign Office had to measure against the risk of over-spending dollars on 'non-essentials' the risk of alienating important sections of American opinion in the year of a Presidential election. In 1944 Mr. Hull's objection on political grounds to the conclusion of a long-term meat contract between the Ministry of Food and the semi-fascist Argentine Government became a subject of serious controversy involving not only the Foreign Office and the State Department but the Prime Minister, President Roosevelt, and the War Cabinet.

The papers in the Foreign Office archives thus provide a mass of material covering the history of particular questions for a limited time, that is to say, for the period in which such questions were the subject of negotiation between Government and Government, and played a direct and immediate part in the formulation of high policy. In order to give advice or warning, and in order to negotiate at the highest level over matters such as meat or wolfram, the Foreign Office and the Missions abroad had to know the intentions of other Departments. This liaison work was carried out in London partly by interdepartmental committees or by the inclusion of Foreign Office representatives in the departments concerned. Furthermore, although



the Foreign Office might act as a clearing-house<sup>1</sup> for business of all kinds, and an Ambassador or Minister abroad, in virtue of his opportunities of access, might discuss any question with the Government to which he was accredited, the 'foreign' activities of other Departments during the war were so manifold and of such importance that they created channels of intercourse of their own, not merely for their day-to-day transactions, but for the discussion of large issues of policy. The Ministry of Economic Warfare, with its own political chief of Cabinet (not War Cabinet) rank, its own Intelligence service and Foreign Relations division, was more of an independent kingdom than an outlying satrapy of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Ministry corresponded directly (through the Foreign Office) with the diplomatic Missions and sometimes had its own representatives attached to them. Nevertheless the Ambassador himself would take charge of business of high diplomatic importance, and the Ministry always consulted the Foreign Office on the political aspects of trade negotiations.<sup>2</sup>

For a time indeed there was a danger of confusion owing to the number of organisations in the United States reporting directly to Departments other than the Foreign Office. In January, 1941, the activities of these separate bodies (excluding the Ministry of Economic Warfare) were brought under the immediate control, not of the Ambassador, but of a British Supply Council in North America. Mr. Arthur B. Purvis,<sup>3</sup> the Chairman of this Council, and, previously, head of the British Purchasing Commission in the United States, was in constant personal contact with Mr. Morgenthau, Jr., United States Secretary of the Treasury. Sir Frederick Phillips, of the British Treasury, came to the United States on two special missions in 1940 to explain and discuss the problems caused by the rapid exhaustion of British purchasing power in gold and dollars. These discussions were the background of the Lend-Lease agreements; four years later Lord Keynes, who undertook five different missions to the United States during the war, went to Washington to put before the United States Treasury the equally difficult problems concerned with the ending of Lend-Lease and the first stages of British economic recovery.

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<sup>1</sup> There were times when—through the British Missions abroad—the Foreign Office in its capacity as a 'clearing-house' was able to take a rapid initiative in matters normally outside its province. Thus during the German attack on the Low Countries and France in 1940 the Foreign Office began enquiries about the preparation and co-ordination of measures to secure, if possible, the withdrawal from enemy hands of valuable machinery and industrial products.

<sup>2</sup> The actual working of the machinery of blockade (navicerts, etc.) in foreign ports was in the hands of the Consular Service. For a full treatment of these war trade negotiations see W. M. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade* (History of the Second World War. U.K. Civil Series), 2 vols. (hereinafter referred to as 'Medlicott').

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Purvis, a Scots-Canadian industrialist, was killed in an air accident in July, 1941.

Anglo-American economic negotiations—for example, those connected with shipping—were, indeed, never out of the range of the Foreign Office.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Morgenthau asked through the British Ambassador in Washington and the United States Ambassador in London for the first of Sir Frederick Phillips' two missions in 1940; early in July, 1940, the Foreign Office transmitted to the State Department a warning on the seriousness of the dollar position, and in October, 1940, the British Ambassador suggested the second series of talks. When, in the summer of 1941, there was a strong current of criticism in the United States that Lend-Lease materials were being used for the benefit of British exports, the American complaints came to the Foreign Office through the British Ambassador, and the undertakings given by the British Government to meet the complaints were transmitted through the same channel. Lord Halifax took part in the critical financial discussions of 1944 just as Lord Lothian had been concerned with those of 1940.

The history of the Anglo-American conversations in 1944<sup>2</sup> over oil reserves is another example of the practical, if untidy way in which large questions of policy fell partly within and partly outside the sphere of the Foreign Office. On the technical side, the Foreign Office could not do more than 'observe' negotiations about oil reserves. On the political side, they intervened to advise the War Cabinet upon the importance of meeting as fully and as quickly as possible American demands which seemed at first untimely and unreasonable. They had also to put the political aspects of the British case to the State Department. Thus, when in February, 1944, President Roosevelt proposed abruptly that a joint committee of representatives of Cabinet rank should meet in Washington to draw up an oil agreement, Lord Halifax protested to the State Department that the British Government should not be asked to accept a unilateral decision of this kind<sup>3</sup>, and that it was impossible, in view of the nearness of the cross-Channel invasion, to send Cabinet Ministers to Washington.

Early in the summer of 1941 the War Cabinet introduced a new form of devolution by appointing a Minister of State, of Cabinet rank, to act as adviser on political questions to the Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East.<sup>4</sup> The duties of this Resident Minister

<sup>1</sup> There were also Allied Conferences on post-war economic questions, e.g., at Bretton Woods on international financial arrangements and at Hot Springs on food supplies, outside the technical competence of the Foreign Office. Here again, however, much preliminary discussion took place through diplomatic channels, and the Foreign Office was kept informed of the proceedings and consulted about the political aspect of any decisions.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter XXI, section (iii).

<sup>3</sup> i.e. about the 'level' at which the conversations were to be held.

<sup>4</sup> The term 'Middle East' was used by the military authorities and the War Cabinet, and therefore accepted by the Foreign Office, to cover an area extending from Malta to the Persian Gulf. The area in question was larger than the whole of the two areas previously known as the Near East and the Middle East. It can be argued that, especially before the summer of 1941, this 'amalgamation' of at least two distinct regions was not altogether fortunate.

included the co-ordination of British diplomatic action throughout the area. The experiment might have led to difficulties. The Minister of State had powers to act on behalf of the War Cabinet in an emergency, but he was without departmental duties, and therefore did not take the place of the Foreign Secretary as the Minister ultimately responsible to Parliament for the formulation and execution of policy in the Middle East. The Minister of State in fact carried out a number of important diplomatic negotiations; thus Mr. O. Lyttelton, Minister of State in Cairo from July, 1941, to May, 1942, negotiated an agreement over the Levant States with General de Gaulle.

The arrangement worked reasonably well in practice.<sup>1</sup> The Minister of State was concerned more with matters requiring administrative co-ordination than with political decisions.<sup>2</sup> He was therefore of service to the Foreign Office and other Departments since he could settle most interdepartmental questions without referring them to London. His advice on political affairs was considered seriously—though it was not always taken—because he was better situated than any of the Heads of Missions to consider questions from the point of view of the Middle East as a whole.<sup>3</sup> The experiment was extended to other areas. A Minister Resident was sent to the Far East, too late, however, to be able to do much before the Japanese conquests. A similar appointment was made for a short time in West Africa. After the North African landings, Mr. H. Macmillan went as Minister Resident to Algiers; his sphere of authority was extended to Italy, and, later, to Greece.

The establishment of a separate and secret organisation dealing with Resistance Movements was necessary in itself, but awkward at times from the point of view of the co-ordination of policy. The Foreign Office had to make representations in the course of 1943 that the action taken, especially in Greece, in support of communist-controlled Resistance groups prejudged and indeed was contrary to

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<sup>1</sup> There was indeed occasional friction because the Ministers reported directly to the Prime Minister, but their reports generally went through the Foreign Office. They often corresponded directly with the Foreign Secretary, who replied to them as he would reply to Ambassadors. The appointment of Foreign Office advisers to the Ministers did much to avoid confusion.

<sup>2</sup> The political quiet of the Middle East (except for the revolt of Rashid Ali) was in part a legacy of the prestige of British arms in the 1914–18 war, but its maintenance depended upon a satisfactory solution of difficult economic problems of supply and distribution. The administrative structure required to meet these problems could not be provided by the Middle Eastern countries, and was built up by the British authorities during the year 1941. The developments were largely outside the sphere of the Foreign Office, though here, as elsewhere, the Foreign Office were concerned with complaints at a 'high diplomatic level' arising out of the functioning of the economic administration.

<sup>3</sup> On the other hand certain Heads of Mission with a long experience of the Middle East, for example, Sir K. Cornwallis at Baghdad, and Sir R. Bullard at Teheran, were, as the Foreign Office realised, better able to judge the repercussions of policy on Arab opinion.

the policy accepted by the War Cabinet and likely to have the most serious consequences after the war.

Finally, the highest matters of policy, involving the post-war settlement as well as the immediate conduct of operations, were discussed continuously by direct exchanges or at meetings between the Prime Minister and the President of the United States. Mr. Churchill, with the knowledge of his colleagues in the Cabinet, had begun sending these messages when he was First Lord of the Admiralty. Their purpose had been to give the President information, and throughout the exchanges Mr. Churchill remained the more active of the two correspondents. From May, 1940, he sent over a thousand telegrams to Mr. Roosevelt, and received about eight hundred, most of them in the form of replies.

At least on the British side, however, this correspondence did not lead to any serious confusion of policy. After one or two mild protests from the British Embassy in Washington that the Ambassador, who might himself have to see the President on the questions at issue, should be given full and early knowledge of these special telegrams, Mr. Churchill saw to it that the Foreign Office and the Ambassador were told what he was saying, or at least what he had said. On important matters within his concern the Secretary of State was consulted in advance about the text of the messages.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office recognised the value of this personal approach, and there were times when the Prime Minister himself thought it wiser to refuse their suggestions that he should make use of it. Similarly the Prime Minister consulted the Foreign Office and, obviously, the War Cabinet over proposals put to him by the President at their meetings without previous notice.<sup>2</sup> On their side the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and his advisers recognised that the Prime Minister was concerned (as indeed they too were concerned) above all else, and, if necessary, at all risks, with the defeat of the enemy. The Foreign Office was often disquieted at the subordination of long-term British political interests to immediate military considerations. A subordination of an equally drastic and dangerous kind took place in economic and financial matters, and had to be accepted as the price of victory.

Thus, in spite of the development of new machinery and of parallel agencies, the Foreign Office and the diplomatic Missions abroad remained the principal instruments for the formulation and execution of policy and the principal channels of communication between Government and Government. From the nature of its work, the first requirements of the Office were that it should be adequately supplied with information, and able to assess this information in

<sup>1</sup> See also below, pp. xxxv-vii.

<sup>2</sup> For an exceptional case (the 'Morgenthau plan') see below, pp. l-li.

depth.<sup>1</sup> An immense mass of material was received, and yet, in spite of it, or perhaps because of it, the level of interpretation was not always sufficiently high. Moreover, owing to the increasing amount of business conducted at a 'Government to Government' level, and to the confusion of world affairs after 1929, the senior members of the service at home and in many posts abroad had been overworked for a long time, and had little opportunity to look outside their day-to-day business. The risk of a superficial approach (though it might not affect the skill and acuteness with which particular questions were handled) was greater because members of the service were transferred at intervals of a few years from country to country or department to department, and not only for the practical reason that otherwise promotion would become a haphazard matter; the foreign service of a country with world-wide interests required that its members should have more than local knowledge and experience.<sup>2</sup> Other defects of the 'machine' might have been corrected earlier; for example, the lack of a special staff or adviser competent to deal with technical economic questions of an international kind. The Foreign Office had thus been at a disadvantage during the years when the problems of German reparation and inter-Allied debts overshadowed the whole field of international relations. Decisions on these questions tended to be left to experts in other departments, or outside them. In such case the political matters on which the Foreign Office could speak with authority might well be given insufficient attention.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of some shortcomings, however, the 'machine' worked well during the war. Mr. Eden, who was Secretary of State from

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<sup>1</sup> The figures of incoming correspondence in 1913 were 68,119, in 1938 238,879 and in 1944, 402,400. Many of these telegrams or despatches were of a routine character, but the proportion of important material was greater in 1938 than in 1913. A considerable amount of time and money was spent before 1914 in reporting the movements even of minor members of European reigning families.

<sup>2</sup> It is often said that British diplomats moved among too narrow social circles in the countries to which they were accredited. There is some truth in this view. It was more true before 1914 than after 1919. It remained true in some countries for reasons outside British control. The Soviet Government isolated the Diplomatic Corps from almost all intercourse with Russians except for the conduct of official business. Even in a parliamentary democracy, however, a diplomat has to remember that his first duty is to maintain good relations with the Government rather than to cultivate members of the Opposition. In particular, he must avoid giving cause for suspicion that he is using his position for purposes of political intrigue. During (and before) the war the Germans did themselves more harm than good in this matter, for example, throughout Latin America. M. Maisky allowed himself a freedom of public criticism which would hardly have been tolerated in the case of other Ambassadors, yet one may doubt whether the political value to the Russians of their Mission in Great Britain was really enhanced.

<sup>3</sup> These facts were neither the sole nor the most important reason for the decline in the influence of the Foreign Office in the period immediately before 1939. A historian cannot ignore such a decline, though he would not describe it in terms of an 'eclipse', or regard it as a feature of the actual years of war.

December 23, 1940, to the resignation of Mr. Churchill's administration in July, 1945, was more of a 'professional' Foreign Secretary than his immediate predecessors in the sense that his parliamentary and ministerial career had centred mainly round the business of the Foreign Office. He had learned much—and discarded not a little—while in office and in opposition to official policy before 1939. One of his comments on a Foreign Office paper of 1943, 'Let us be most prudent never to promise in the future what we cannot perform', sums up the sharpest lesson of these earlier years. He was a realist, and at the same time inclined by temperament to think in terms of distant consequences and ultimate considerations. The relations, personal and political, between Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden were exceptionally close. Mr. Eden was thus able to balance, and often to correct Mr. Churchill's rapid approach and equally rapid conclusions. He was also most fortunate in having Sir Alexander Cadogan as Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office. Sir A. Cadogan had remarkable powers of judgment and lucid expression. His minutes on paper after paper deal with almost every aspect of foreign affairs. They stood out at the time, and are likely to stand out in retrospect, as models of open-mindedness and sound conclusion. They bear no signs of haste or half-finished reasoning even when the writer gives a warning that he needs more time for reflection. They often have a certain irony, never any rancour or prejudice. Only their modesty is delusive; the reader of these short notes written (they are very rarely typed) in a firm, quiet hand may not realise at once how great a mastery they show.

In general the technique of British policy remained—and was bound to remain—as it had developed over a long period of time.<sup>1</sup> British diplomatic methods were at once cautious and extremely flexible, informal and highly professionalised; these habits of caution and understatement were a part of the tradition of a maritime and trading community aware of its vulnerability. The wide spread of British interests throughout the world made it necessary to consider questions of policy from every angle, to show a long patience, and to accept compromise. Furthermore a cautious policy was necessary owing to parliamentary control at home and owing to the ties linking the United Kingdom with the rest of the Commonwealth. The great Dominions—the term was already outmoded as a description of these independent, sovereign States—made their own decisions, and their Governments were responsible solely to their own electorates, but there was still something which could be called a Commonwealth foreign policy based upon common or mutual interests as well as upon sentiment and history. The war-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Eyre Crowe's memorandum of 1907 (*British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, vol. III, Appendix A) remains the best short exposition of what might be called the 'traditional' British foreign policy.



time relations between Great Britain and other members of the Commonwealth were not merely closer than their respective relations with other Allies; they were different in kind. Ministers of the Dominions attended meetings of the War Cabinet; Field-Marshal Smuts was an Elder Statesman of the whole Commonwealth. The initiative in the formulation of policy came largely—though not altogether<sup>1</sup>—from London, since the King's Government in the United Kingdom tended to be more directly informed than the King's Governments overseas. For this very reason the Foreign Office had to take account of the wishes of the Dominions and to ensure that their Prime Ministers were consulted in matters of concern to them.<sup>2</sup>

With the outbreak of war one of the first problems was that of the co-ordination of policy with France. On the face of things this co-ordination should have been easy. British and French Ministers were able to meet within a matter of hours; even in the last confused days of the battle of France two such meetings were held at the shortest notice. In September, 1939, a Supreme War Council came into existence smoothly and without elaborate preparation. In the spring of 1940, Great Britain and France found little difficulty in signing a declaration not to conclude a separate peace. Nevertheless the 'co-ordination of will' between the two Allies was never complete; there was an awkward disagreement on September 2, 1939—the second day of the German attack on Poland—over the co-ordination of the time-limit of the Anglo-French ultimatum and on this same day M. Bonnet was ready—while the British Government refused—to listen to Mussolini's proposal for a conference without any previous withdrawal of the invading German troops.<sup>3</sup>

Until the Germans began their offensive in Norway, Anglo-French differences were less apparent because the military situation did not compel, or rather did not seem to require rapid and unified action. The initiative was open, at least formally, to the Allies, although the French, in particular, did not realise how dangerously limited was their field of choice. There was, however, one limiting factor which each of the two Allied Governments understood. They knew that they could not open a decisive campaign against Germany in 1939

<sup>1</sup> The views of the Canadian Government were of special importance over the whole field of Anglo-American relations.

<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office also had to consider the views of the Government of India and to defend the interests of the Moslem States in the Middle and Far East with the sovereigns of which Great Britain was in special treaty relationship.

<sup>3</sup> It may well be argued that one of the mistakes of British propaganda in the early part of the war was that it made somewhat futile efforts to discredit Hitler with the German people, but neglected to counter the dangerous German propaganda intended to discredit the British Government and the British war effort in the eyes of the French people.

or 1940. In September, 1939, the British Cabinet decided to make plans on the assumption that the war would go on at least for three years. The first year could be only one of preparation. Thus it was possible for the time to evade the question how the war would be won. An evasion of this kind allowed a certain wishful thinking. On the British side one may notice over-confidence in the ultimate efficacy of the blockade as an instrument of victory. On the French side the tendency to evasion took the form of favouring plans which would remove the scene of fighting from the borders of France or redress the balance of numbers to the French advantage. Hence the French proposals for getting the support of the armies of the Balkan States, or for cutting off German oil supplies from Roumania and the U.S.S.R. Hence also the readiness of the French to accept a plan which would deprive Germany of iron ore supplies not only from the port of Narvik but from the northern Swedish ore fields generally.

These plans came to nothing. Fortunately, as it turned out, British military arguments against becoming involved in war with Russia over Baku, or attempting a diversion at Salonika prevented steps which might have made chances of victory almost impossible. The Scandinavian plans were mishandled, or fumbled, at Cabinet level—both on the political and the military side. On the political side the vacillations and delays were due in part perhaps to a deep and almost subconscious inhibition caused by the hatred of war as such. In any case the British Government hesitated to regard hitherto accepted rules of international law as inapplicable to neutral countries which submitted to illegal pressure from Germany. It was impossible at this stage of the war—before the complete foulness of German behaviour was known—to decide what should be done about the smaller neutrals from whom Germany was extorting by threats or open breach of international law military and economic advantages which the Allies denied to themselves by their scruples. The Allies were fighting for the rule of law and the independence of small States against German aggression; they did not wish to lower their own standards. On grounds of expediency they had also to consider the effect upon neutral opinion generally, and especially upon American opinion of action against neutral rights. In the last resort indeed the British Government (and the American) failed to see that the enemy would leave them no choice in the matter. If the Germans decided to extend the area of the war, the Allies could not prevent them from so doing.

After the collapse of France the war took a new form for Great Britain. Hitherto the fact that the land war was being fought outside Great Britain created a certain illusion (as in 1914-18) among the British people of a Continental war to which they were lending their



assistance. To some extent this illusion—which was not shared in official circles—had an incidental and surprising result. British opinion did not envisage the collapse of France as the defeat of Great Britain. The escape of the British Expeditionary Force from destruction at Dunkirk was seen, absurdly, but fortunately, almost as a kind of victory—the extrication of a British army from a campaign which was primarily a French affair. Events showed that this reaction, less strange, perhaps, when considered in relation to English history, was neither selfish nor foolishly self-confident. At a time when the world in general took for granted an Allied and not only a French defeat, the value of the 'optical illusion' cannot be over-estimated. It provided the foundation for a new and splendid leadership.

The personal influence of Mr. Churchill was so immense, four-square and noble that it is unnecessary to try to heighten it by disparaging his predecessor. Mr. Chamberlain's words to his colleagues in the Cabinet on September 1 summed up his own personality.<sup>1</sup> His direction of the war and some of his public phrases showed clumsiness and lack of imagination, but in matters of policy and strategy he followed conscientiously the expert advice given to him; his own opinions indeed were shared by most of his advisers. On the other hand Mr. Churchill's judgment throughout the Scandinavian episode was by no means free from fault. Nevertheless in the changed circumstances of the German victory in France and the gravest threat to Great Britain, Mr. Churchill's leadership had about it something absolute and adamant; something which had not been known in English history since the years 1757–1759. Such power and insight brought a new direction in every branch of the State. This massive driving force manifested itself at once in the attempt to save France, and then to deter the two leading French soldiers as well as a majority of French politicians from the unnecessary immolation of total surrender.

For the Foreign Office these days of military disaster were crowded also with other negotiations; an attempt to discover how far the Soviet Government might change their attitude in view of the dangers which their policy of the previous twelve months had brought upon them; last moment efforts to delay Mussolini's entry into the war; a sudden menace from Japan; acceptance of the attitude of Turkey and of Egypt, and—most significant of all—exchanges with the Government of the United States. Here also the Prime Minister, stronger in temperament and better informed than the Ambassador in Washington about the mood of the British nation, took principal control by means of his direct correspondence with President Roosevelt. The President indeed was more hopeful than his military

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<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 1, and note 1.

advisers—including General Marshall—about the survival of Great Britain.

A historian, reading the Foreign Office papers of this time, is struck by the way in which, without minimising the extreme gravity of the situation, the negotiations undertaken by the Foreign Office or by the Ambassadors abroad express confidence in ultimate victory.<sup>1</sup> In different circumstances Sir P. Loraine at Rome, Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen at Ankara, Sir S. Cripps in Moscow, Sir R. Craigie in Japan, and Sir S. Hoare in Madrid used similar language. In Japan there was no practical alternative to a stubborn retreat, together with a warning that an attack on Great Britain would mean ultimate disaster to the attacking Power. In the United States the first task was to recreate confidence that Great Britain was a 'good risk', and therefore worth helping. Even after the first mood of alarm had passed, American opinion, in the view of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office, was too ready to assume that a German invasion would succeed. Against this background, and, incidentally, in the 'pre-election' circumstances of American politics, the Foreign Office also had to try to secure American diplomatic support in restraining Japan and in influencing Marshal Pétain's Government against further surrender to German demands, especially with regard to the French fleet.

The question of the French fleet was of the highest importance to British survival, just as the question of the British fleet loomed large in American calculations about their own chance of defeating Axis attack. The British Government had not anticipated the terms which the Germans laid down about the fleet in the armistice with France. These terms (like those providing for an 'unoccupied' area in France) were adroitly devised in order to allow the French Government the illusion that they could 'contract out' of the war, while escaping the consequences of military defeat, and, incidentally, keeping their promise not to allow their fleet to fall into German hands.<sup>2</sup>

This clever German move succeeded only too well. In fact the Germans could put inescapable pressure on the French, and the British Government could not avoid—without enormous risk—taking action to keep as many warships as possible from reaching French

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<sup>1</sup> The calmness of tone and manner of the Foreign Office papers in the weeks of extreme danger is almost ironical. Indeed the only external evidence of crisis is a certain confusion in the filing system when, as a result of instructions (not in themselves unnecessary) for the practice of greater economy in the use of paper, the Registry gave up its excellent but lavish system of including only a few papers under a single jacket. The results of this change of method soon became so chaotic that Sir A. Cadogan ordered a reversion—with due care for economy—to the previous practice.

<sup>2</sup> The Germans did not intend to limit themselves ultimately to the terms of the armistice. They contravened these terms at once in the illegal charges levied as part of the cost of their army of occupation.

metropolitan ports. One of the results of British preventive action was the tragic engagement at Oran. This event intensified French anger at Great Britain, and the more so because the French Government put out an untrue version of the facts. It is, however, doubtful whether, if the engagement at Oran had been avoided, the policy of Marshal Pétain's Government towards Great Britain would have been any less hostile.<sup>1</sup> Darlan's anglophobia was increased by the French losses at Oran, but Laval was not an admiral, and his policy of Franco-German collaboration was not based on sentiment—least of all, a sentiment of blind revenge. In 1940 Laval, Darlan, and Marshal Pétain himself believed that Germany would certainly win the war. For some time after their own surrender Marshal Pétain and his Government expected a British defeat almost at once. They remained convinced throughout 1941 of the unlikelihood of a British victory, and would not have refused the price of any real German concessions merely in order to prolong British resistance. They even regarded the prolongation of this resistance as dangerous to France, and as a threat to the stability of Europe.<sup>2</sup> Marshal Pétain's confused and half-hearted efforts by secret negotiation to arrange a kind of *modus vivendi* with the British were mainly an attempt, once again, to 'contract out' of the blockade and to establish with Great Britain the same relations of quasi-neutrality which he hoped to secure from the Germans. At best they could be regarded as a reinsurance when the British defeat was surprisingly delayed, and the French Ministers began to be afraid that Great Britain and Germany might come to terms at French expense; in other words, that the British Government would treat France as Marshal Pétain's Government had been willing to treat Great Britain.<sup>3</sup>

One fact of this time is indeed often overlooked. The situation throughout German-occupied Europe in the latter half of 1940 and the first half of 1941 would have been more serious for Great Britain—and the task of the Foreign Office more difficult—if the Germans had behaved in accordance with the illusions of the Vichy Govern-

<sup>1</sup> Marshal Pétain's Government had already shewn, among other military measures favourable to Germany, by a breach of the French promise to ensure that German air pilots captured in France should be transferred to custody in Great Britain, that they would do nothing to prevent the strengthening of the German forces of invasion.

<sup>2</sup> M. Paul Baudouin's diary (*Neuf mois au Gouvernement*, p. 309) contains a revealing comment on a speech by Mr. Churchill on August 20, 1940. Mr. Churchill had spoken of fighting a long war until victory. M. Baudouin broadcast: 'Les années défilent sous ses yeux comme un programme de destructions: 1940 . . . 1941 . . . 1942. S'il devait en être ainsi, si la guerre devait continuer ses ravages sur l'Europe et sur le monde pendant tant de mois, c'est la misère qui triompherait. Aucun homme d'Etat soucieux de ses devoirs envers son peuple . . . ne peut, même en esprit, adhérer à ce fatalisme de destruction.'

<sup>3</sup> The German attack on Russia made no difference to the attitude of the French Government. They expected a Russian defeat. In any case, a German defeat at the hands of the Russians would have been, from Marshal Pétain's point of view, a disaster for France, since it would certainly have resulted in the collapse of the conservative Vichy régime.

ment, that is to say, if they had acted in a manner likely to reconcile the conquered nations to a Europe organised and dominated by the German Reich. Great Britain might have been isolated in neutral—including American—opinion as an intransigent and selfish Power fighting only for her own imperial interests. Even the German explanation of their attack on Russia might have carried some conviction.

The Germans put out propaganda in and after the autumn of 1940 about a New Order which they intended to establish in Europe—a united Europe under German hegemony with immense economic advantages to all concerned. This propaganda never made much headway. It trailed a great deal of doctrinaire talk about *Lebensraum* and *Grossraum* and other favourite terms of the Nazi theorists. Hitler himself was not much interested in it; conquest and the stark employment of power—the everlasting tramp of heavy-booted police and soldiers—were more satisfying to him than the conciliation of conquered peoples. The Germans were not even on good terms with their Italian allies; they distrusted and despised them, and, in return, the Italians (including Mussolini) quickly realised that their place in the New Europe was not likely to be much better than that of France.

In any case the Germans soon dropped the pretence of a New Order. The organisation of such an order depended on victory, and from the early winter of 1941-2, the complete victory—which had receded unexpectedly in the autumn of 1940—looked more distant. The planning of a New Order had to give way to the immediate requirements of war. The treatment of the occupied countries became more severe. The Germans began to meet sabotage and organised underground resistance. Their response was savage and brutal, and, in a last analysis, ineffective. The 'New Order' took the political form of mass executions of hostages, the imposition of torture, and, economically, the exploitation of subject labour on a vast scale. Meanwhile the answer to the Germans had been made, at the suggestion of the United States, in the Atlantic Charter, and to this affirmation of human rights the Germans could make no effective reply.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister has written that, on hearing of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, his first thought was that Great Britain

<sup>1</sup> It is an interesting example of the difference between British and American ways of thinking that the Foreign Office had proposed a broadcast by Mr. Keynes explaining that Great Britain had more to offer Europe in the form of an order based on sterling, and linked with the free nations of the Commonwealth than Germany could offer in a new order based on the mark and the subordination of the rest of Europe to German economic domination. Some of Mr. Keynes' economic arguments were used by Mr. Eden in a speech of May 29, 1941; the main broadcast was never delivered because the President—while not disagreeing with the British view—wanted a statement in broad terms of human rights. See R. F. Harrod, *Life of J. M. Keynes*, pp. 503-4 and 509-10.

could not now lose the war.<sup>1</sup> This was the view of most Englishmen, and especially of those in a position to measure the dangers through which the country had passed since the spring of 1940. Hitherto all that could be done since the collapse of France had been to gain time, win tactical successes, and wait for a great strategical opening, after Hitler had made some large and irretrievable mistake. It was not unreasonable to hope that such a man would make such a mistake, though, when Hitler actually made it in his attack on Russia, the fact was realised more quickly in the Foreign Office than by military opinion. Most—not all—military experts in Great Britain thought that the Russian armies would be defeated within a few months.<sup>2</sup> The German position would then be much stronger, and an Allied victory would require even greater sacrifice in the face of a long war. On the other hand the British Government wisely acted on the assumption that Russian resistance would be prolonged. Within a few hours of the German attack the Prime Minister promised the fullest assistance which Great Britain could provide, although every item supplied could be spared only at a risk to the rapid equipment of the British Forces.<sup>3</sup>

The entry of the United States into the war was—as seen from Great Britain—a more certain guarantee of victory because at this very time Hitler had failed to break Russian resistance, and was unlikely to do so—if at all—until Germany had suffered more and heavier losses, and the western Powers had gained invaluable time. The Prime Minister, however, had always thought that the United States would be compelled in American interests to enter the war as a full belligerent. In the event American entry was delayed much longer than Mr. Churchill had at one time expected, and the delay was partly the result of the successful defence of Great Britain. Nevertheless throughout the months of extreme crisis, even as a myth, the idea that American belligerency might be close at hand was of service in the formulation of policy and the fight for survival.

Mr. Churchill has also written—and the two statements are not inconsistent—that he found the strain of war greater during the period of defeat in 1942 than in 1940 and 1941.<sup>4</sup> The length of time for which this strain had already been endured was no doubt one reason why it seemed heavier. There was also a sense of disappointment and humiliation over the losses of 1942. Above all the Prime

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister's words are more positive: 'So we had won after all,' Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, (English edition) III, 539. (These volumes are referred to hereinafter as 'Churchill'.)

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 150, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> The President seems to have decided independently to help the Russians if they were attacked, but the effect on American opinion of the Prime Minister's prompt action is a fact to which the Russians at least have never given sufficient weight.

<sup>4</sup> This was also the view of the Foreign Office.

Minister's responsibilities were extended in and after 1942 to cover a new situation. Once again—and to their good fortune—Great Britain and the Dominions were fighting with powerful Allies, but the alliance brought with it, as always, serious problems of unity among its members. The Prime Minister had the heavy burden of persuading the Americans to give up an impracticable strategic plan, and to accept something more within the compass of Allied resources in 1942. He had to argue—with the prestige of resistance in 1940 receding into the background and without the prestige of victory—against proposals put forward by the President and his most trusted military adviser, General Marshall, and obviously supported by Stalin.

The discussions on high strategy have been fully described elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> and in any case were mainly outside the sphere of the Foreign Office. So also were the arrangements made for the establishment of a Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee at Washington upon which the British Chiefs of Staff would have permanent representation. There was no counterpart, and, for obvious reasons, there could hardly be a counterpart in the political sphere to this close and continuous military collaboration, or to the Combined Boards dealing with production and the allocation of resources. The British Embassy in Washington and the United States Embassy in London already provided machinery for political consultation.

These existing channels of communication, however, were different in kind from those provided by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The business of the Foreign Office and of the Department of State extended from the particular and temporary ends of military collaboration into wider questions of permanent national interest. The function of the British diplomatic Mission in Washington was not to work out with the Department of State a 'combined' policy, but to transmit and explain the views of the British Government, and, through the Foreign Office, to inform the British Government of American views. There was a common political purpose—the defeat of the enemy in war—but 'victory' was by no means a simple term; it had one meaning for the United States, another for Great Britain, and—disastrously, as it turned out—a third meaning for Russia. To some extent, indeed, the close and friendly Anglo-American collaboration over immediate tasks—the 'combination' in military plans, and in the production and supply of things necessary for the defeat of the enemy—was delusive because it tended to conceal the differences in political interests and outlook. When, in the last stages of

<sup>1</sup> See the volumes on *Grand Strategy* in the History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series, edited by Sir J. Butler. (These volumes are referred to hereinafter as *Grand Strategy*).



the war, the immediate purposes of 'combination' were coming to fulfilment, their temporary nature was shewn with disconcerting suddenness, for example, by the abrupt termination of Lend-Lease.

Nonetheless the existence of a very close liaison on the military side without any corresponding political instrument—a committee working, day to day, as the Combined Chiefs of Staff worked, on an agenda—was bound to have important consequences and the more so because the business at the meetings between the Prime Minister and the President was primarily military. The Chiefs of Staff therefore attended with a team of assistants; the Foreign Office and the State Department were not always represented by their political heads, and sometimes only by relatively subordinate officials. The Prime Minister was more guarded, but the President was apt to take decisions carrying with them important political implications without consulting his expert advisers. Political questions could not in fact be separated from military decisions. Even during the informal and non-binding staff conversations held at Washington in the early part of 1941 the American representatives were warned by their own authorities that 'it is to be expected that proposals of the British representatives will have been drawn up with chief regard for the support of the British Commonwealth. Never absent from British minds are their post-war interests, commercial and military. We should likewise safeguard our own eventual interests'.<sup>1</sup>

It is thus unlikely that the British Embassy in Washington could have done more to clear away prejudices and misunderstandings in the minds of the President and his advisers over the motives of British policy. In any case the Prime Minister was to a large extent his own interpreter. His personal messages to Mr. Roosevelt were of the greatest political service, especially during the year and a half between the collapse of France and the entry of the United States into the war. On the political side, however, there was a certain danger that the President would take the Prime Minister's arguments and predilections as formal statements of British policy, and also that he might feel afraid of being over-persuaded to support proposals which American public opinion would regard as more in British than American interest.

As the war went on, and the development of American power increased, Mr. Roosevelt shewed some restiveness, even perhaps a little jealousy at the Prime Minister's initiative.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Winant, in a conversation with Mr. Law<sup>3</sup> on August 23, 1943, also made the comment that the machinery of the Department of State was much

<sup>1</sup> M. Matloff and E. M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*. (United States Army in World War II), pp. 29–30.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Stettinius, in May, 1944, spoke plainly on this matter. See below, p. 478.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. R. Law, M.P., see p. 433, note 2.

complicated by the direct line of communication between the Prime Minister and the President. He suggested that the complication was less in London because the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were always in the closest consultation, whereas in Washington there were no daily talks between the President and the Secretary of State. If they 'saw each other once a month, their relations could be considered very close'.<sup>1</sup> The situation, as far as British observers knew, had not changed a year later. Mr. Stettinius, shortly after his appointment to the Secretaryship of State in December, 1944, told Admiral Leahy that, with the President's approval, he was appointing Mr. C. E. Bohlen to act as a special liaison officer between the White House and the State Department. Admiral Leahy thought the plan 'an excellent idea', and described it as an effort by Mr. Stettinius 'to get in closer contact with the President who had been handling much foreign affairs business without consulting the Department of State'.<sup>2</sup> The United States Chiefs of Staff were themselves often unaware of what the President and the Prime Minister were discussing. General Deane, who was United States Secretary of the Combined Chiefs of Staff until 1943, has written that he had a very close working arrangement with his British colleague whereby he obtained 'much information from British sources concerning the subjects of communications between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. For some reason our President often kept our Chiefs of Staff in the dark on these matters until the die was cast, and, at times, the advance information that I could obtain was invaluable'.<sup>3</sup> Since the British Embassy in Washington communi-

<sup>1</sup> From other American sources this statement would appear to have been an exaggeration, but 'once a week' might not have been wide of the mark. Mr. Winant, in this conversation, shewed that he did not feel that he was himself receiving the full confidence of the President. (It is worth remembering that during the first World War Mr. Page, United States Ambassador in London, suffered—though for different reasons—from a similar lack of confidence on the part of Mr. Wilson.) From the British point of view, the President's liking for 'one-man Missions' did not provide an adequate substitute for a continuous and fully informed political liaison on what might be called the 'highest official levels'. Mr. Hopkins, in particular, was generally of great service in smoothing over differences of opinion and in interpreting British views to the President as well as American views to the Prime Minister. Mr. Hopkins' position, however, as a friend and personal adviser to the President, and his bad health—he was always in danger of physical collapse—made his intervention somewhat haphazard and uncertain. Moreover his own relationship with the President was less close after his long illness in the first half of 1944.

<sup>2</sup> W. D. Leahy, *I Was There*, 1950, p. 281. Admiral Leahy, while Ambassador at Vichy, had written frequently to the President (at the latter's request), and also to Mr. Welles. He does not seem to have corresponded personally with Mr. Hull or with any one else in the State Department, *id.*, pp. 14–15.

<sup>3</sup> J. R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance*, New York, 1947, p. 9. General Deane's first intimation that he was being sent to the Moscow Conference of 1943 as Mr. Hull's military adviser reached him from a telegram (sent by the Prime Minister in Washington) which was shewn to him by his British colleague. For the lengths to which Mr. Roosevelt went in withholding information from Mr. Hull, see Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 173. The Foreign Office was aware of the differences between British and American procedures, and also of personal differences within Mr. Roosevelt's administration. These matters, however, were not of British concern, and the Foreign Office, obviously, had to accept them.



cated normally with the State Department, Mr. Churchill's direct access to the President had advantages in bringing before him arguments which might otherwise not have reached him. Nevertheless one result seems to have been that the Secretary of State and his officials—as well as the American Chiefs of Staff—tended to take a kind of defensive attitude towards the Prime Minister, and not less so because they knew his masterful powers of persuasion. Admiral Leahy's comment on Mr. Hopkins is typical of a general American feeling: 'Nobody could fool him [Mr. Hopkins], not even Churchill.'<sup>1</sup>

The fear of being over-persuaded to support British interests may be seen in the American attitude at the three meetings of heads of Governments—Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam. At Teheran, where their views on strategic policy had brought the Americans closer to the Russians than to the British on the main issues under discussion, the records give the impression that the President and his military advisers came away with a curiously favourable view of Stalin.<sup>2</sup> At and after Yalta the American suspicions of British policy were even more serious. The President seemed to find in British doubts about Russian policy little more than an outmoded anxiety over the balance of power and to regard the more cautious British attitude towards the demands of Italian politicians, and the action taken by the British forces in Greece as due in no small part to Mr. Churchill's predilection for constitutional monarchy. Mr. Roosevelt believed that, if handled tactfully, and brought within the legal arrangements of the International Security Organisation, the Russians would be no danger to European stability. Hence on almost every point in the discussions at the Conference where the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden were prepared to resist Russian claims or to insist upon con-

<sup>1</sup> Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 138. This defensive feeling came out in the American view that the British had a better 'military-political organisation', and were more clear-headed in working out a national policy. At the time of Mr. Eden's visit to Washington in March, 1943, Admiral Leahy wrote: 'Eden, like other British political officials (*sic*) of high position that I came to know, seemed to have a better understanding of the general policy of his country than was the case with many of our own leaders. Anthony Eden knew what Britain wanted. There were times when I felt that if I could find anybody except Roosevelt who knew what America wanted, it would be an astonishing discovery.' Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 156. See also Gordon A. Harrison, *The European Theatre of Operations, Cross-Channel Attack* (United States Army in World War II), pp. 3-6 for an interesting summary of the difference between British and American procedures.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Leahy gives an account of the first view of Stalin taken by the Americans. After the opening session of the Conference Admiral Leahy wrote: 'The talk among ourselves . . . was about Stalin. Most of us, before we met him, thought he was a bandit leader who had pushed himself up to the top of his government. That impression was wrong. We knew . . . that we were dealing with a highly intelligent man who spoke well, and was determined to get what he wanted for Russia.' Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 205. General Deane also noticed that the Americans were 'all considerably and favourably impressed' by Stalin, 'probably because he advocated the American point of view in our differences with the British. Regardless of this, one could not help but recognise qualities of greatness in the man.' Deane, *op. cit.*, p. 43. It is also, perhaps, significant that General Deane noted that Mr. Churchill's oratory lost effect when it was turned into Russian by an interpreter. *id. ib.*, p. 42.

cession for concession the President gave only half-hearted support or took the Russian side. Mr. Churchill was left alone to argue in favour of allowing the French a place in the Allied Control Commission for Germany, though the President said that the United States army of occupation would be removed after two years, and French support of Great Britain was thus obviously necessary to maintain the balance of military power in Europe against the Russians.<sup>1</sup> The President was much more willing than the Prime Minister to commit himself to Russian proposals for the dismemberment of Germany, and was readier to accept the extreme Russian demands for reparation. Even on the Polish question, when the President had a domestic political interest in getting a settlement satisfactory to the five or six millions of people of Polish descent in the United States, the Prime Minister was firmer in attempting to secure a Polish Government of real independence. Towards the end of the Conference the President embarrassed the British Ministers by insisting on closing the proceedings, not in order to return quickly to the United States, but in order to see King Ibn Saud, King Farouk of Egypt, and the Emperor of Ethiopia on his way home.

On March 13, after his return to the United States, Mr. Stettinius—according to Mr. Forrestal<sup>2</sup>—described the Yalta meeting as most successful, especially as regards Russo-American relations. There was 'every evidence of the Russian desire to co-operate along all lines with the United States'. Three days later—again according to Mr. Forrestal's notes<sup>3</sup>—the President 'indicated' to his Cabinet 'considerable difficulty with British relations. In a semi-jocular manner of speaking, he stated that the British were perfectly willing for the United States to have a war with Russia at any time, and that, in his opinion, to follow the British program would be to proceed toward that end.'

Such was one of the misunderstandings which had arisen in the course of settling the affairs of the Grand Alliance by the method of personal discussion between the three Heads of Governments. It is impossible to say whether, if President Roosevelt had lived longer, there would have been any change, at the highest level, in this American distrust of British aims or in the belief that the Russians

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Roosevelt himself seems belatedly to have realised this fact. At a later stage in the conference he withdrew his opposition to inviting the French to join the Control Commission, and also qualified, somewhat vaguely, his statement about a two-year limit of occupation by saying that, if a World Organisation were established on satisfactory lines, the American public might be more willing to take a full share in the organisation of peace through the world.

<sup>2</sup> *The Forrestal Diaries*, ed. W. Millis and E. S. Duffield, 1951, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, pp. 36-7. Mr. Forrestal was not present at the Cabinet meeting. The note recorded in the *Diaries* was taken by Mr. Hensel, Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

were more amenable to American than to British influence, and that the first care of the United States should be, in President Truman's phrase, to avoid 'ganging up' with Great Britain in an anti-Russian policy.

In the latter part of May, 1945, Mr. Truman and most of his advisers still regarded British policy as an obstacle to satisfactory Russo-American relations.<sup>1</sup> On May 23 the President sent Mr. Hopkins on a visit to Moscow in order to learn more about the Russian attitude. The primary reason for taking this step was the deadlock over the Polish question, but Mr. Hopkins himself told Mr. Forrestal on May 20—before leaving for Moscow—that he was 'sceptical about Churchill, at least in the particular of Anglo-American-Russian relationship', and that he thought it of vital importance that 'the United States should not be manoeuvred into a position where Great Britain had us lined up with them as a *bloc* against Russia to implement England's European policy'. Mr. Truman, at the same time, sent Mr. Joseph E. Davies on a special mission to London. Mr. Davies, a former American Ambassador to Russia and a leading supporter of Russo-American collaboration, was not very successful. He brought with him a proposal, which the Prime Minister was certain to reject, that before the proposed tripartite meeting of Heads of Government, the President should see Stalin alone. The Prime Minister tried to explain to Mr. Davies that the differences between Great Britain and Russia were over matters of principle for which the Western Powers had been fighting the war, and that the United States Government was not just dealing with two 'foreign Powers of which it might be said that both were equally at fault', but Mr. Davies thought Mr. Churchill 'basically more concerned over preserving England's position in Europe than in preserving peace'<sup>2</sup>.

Thus when Mr. Truman reached the tripartite Conference, after refusing to visit Great Britain on his way to Berlin, he continued to see himself as a mediator, from outside the troubled countries of Europe, between the British and the Russians over 'special interests' which were of little direct concern to the United States. After his first meeting with Stalin, Mr. Truman seemed to think that he and Stalin could come to a satisfactory agreement. In his own account of the Potsdam Conference he implies that this settlement would have been made between the United States and Russia, with Great Britain on the side-lines. 'I did not underrate the difficulties before us. I realised that, as Chairman, I would be faced with many problems arising out of the conflict of interests. I knew that Stalin

<sup>1</sup> In spite of warning messages about Russian policy received from Mr. Harriman, United States Ambassador at Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 380. Admiral Leahy also thought that Mr. Churchill wanted to keep the American army in Europe because he saw in its presence 'a hope of sustaining Britain's vanishing position in Europe'.

and Churchill<sup>1</sup> each would have special interests that might clash and distract us<sup>2</sup> . . . 'I was impressed by [Stalin] and talked to him straight from the shoulder. He looked me in the eye when he spoke, and I felt hopeful that we could reach an agreement that would be satisfactory to the world and to ourselves'.<sup>3</sup>

The Prime Minister also carried on a correspondence with Stalin during the period after the German attack on Russia.<sup>4</sup> This correspondence was different in character from the exchanges with Mr. Roosevelt. For one thing, there was no personal contact between the two men until the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow in August, 1942. This visit, at a time of great difficulty and disappointment, was, on balance, a success: it may indeed be described as one of the most outstanding achievements of Mr. Churchill during the war. There was also very little common ground with the Russians, and on the Russian side, no store of good will. The Russians, while accepting all the help which Great Britain and the United States could provide—and indeed making impossible demands—had not responded with much eagerness to the Prime Minister's offer of loyal collaboration. From their own rigid standpoint they had no reason to do so. They were fighting solely because the Germans had attacked them. Before this attack they had been willing to assist Hitler. They had no interest in the idealist motives which were as genuine a part of the British will to victory as the motive of self-preservation. They were perhaps more hostile to western capitalist democracy than to national socialism. Their main wish—after the desire to expel a savage and brutal invader—was that the Western Powers, fascist and anti-fascist, should be not less exhausted than the Soviet Union after the war. M. Maisky told a foreign diplomat in London in December, 1940, that he added up British and German losses not in two columns, but in a single column. The confusion, and not the recovery, of the West, seemed the safest guarantee of Soviet security. If the military effort of repelling an invasion should inflict upon Great Britain immense losses in manpower and resources, so much the better, in the long run, for the Soviet Government.

There was thus an element of irony in the Russian appeals for a 'second front'. The Russians were in fact bearing the weight of the German attack on land. They had fallen into the danger which, at some humiliation, they had tried to avoid. They were now asking

<sup>1</sup> The order of mention is of some interest.

<sup>2</sup> H. S. Truman, *Memoirs* (English edition) I, 275.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 267.

<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister sent a personal message, before the German attack, conveying to Stalin information received by the British Government that this attack was likely to take place. For an earlier letter, see below, pp. 141–2.

from their Allies sacrifices which they had never themselves intended to make. When their demands for a second front were not and could not be met, the Russians began to taunt their Allies, particularly Great Britain, with cowardice and even to hint at treachery. Mr. Churchill's difficulty in persuading the Russians that an invasion resulting only in defeat could be of no help to them was not lessened by the continued American misjudgment of the extent of the preparations necessary for success and the time which these preparations would take.

Stalin's protests against the postponement of the invasion were most strident after the Anglo-American discussions in Washington in May, 1943, when the project of a cross-Channel expedition in the early autumn of that year faded out, and the main operation was fixed for the spring of 1944. It is impossible—without greater knowledge of what the Russians really thought—to say whether Stalin's charges of bad faith at this time were or were not genuinely made, that is to say, whether he believed, in spite of the guarded statements always made by the Prime Minister, that he had been given an assurance of a second front in France in 1943, and that the military situation in June, 1943, was more and not less favourable to the opening of this front than had been expected when the assurance was given. Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that, as seen from Moscow, there was a certain weakness in the Allied case. This weakness lay 'not in our inability to open this second front, but in our having led [Stalin] to believe that we were going to' open it.

The Prime Minister now told Sir A. Clark Kerr that he assumed the 'Churchill-Stalin correspondence' to have come to an end. Stalin himself, however, may have seen that he had gone too far in provoking his Allies—whose assistance he still needed—or he may have been impressed by the results of their Mediterranean strategy, and have realised that, in view of his own successes, he could more easily afford to wait until the spring of 1944 for a large-scale operation in the west. Anyhow, the 'Churchill-Stalin' correspondence was resumed, though, as earlier, the Russian responses had none of the cordiality of Mr. Churchill's approach.

In his correspondence with Mr. Roosevelt, the Prime Minister, while consulting and informing the Secretary of State, was inclined to set out his own views and ideas. The correspondence with Stalin was much more of an exposition of British policy, almost in the form of diplomatic notes addressed to the head of the Russian State. The British Government had found that unless they could reach Stalin directly through the Prime Minister, they could not be sure that their requests and explanations ever got to him at all. Even so, Stalin's answers at times gave the impression that they were written by another and more unfriendly hand. The Russians made very few

concessions to British requests, and hardly any of them were secured without this direct intervention. The official contacts between the British Embassy in Moscow and the Soviet leaders were infrequent, stiff, and formal. M. Maisky and his successor M. Gusev saw far more of the British Ministers and high officials in the Foreign Office, but there is little evidence that the reports of their representatives in London carried much weight with the Soviet Government.

Mr. Eden, as well as the Foreign Office, inclined to regard Stalin, at all events before 1944, as more reasonable than M. Molotov, and even as 'comparatively co-operative'.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt about the genuineness on the British side of the wish for co-operation. The War Cabinet and the Foreign Office were generally agreed—and for the most obvious reasons—that the future peace and prosperity of Europe, the prevention of more German aggression, and the larger plans for the organisation of world security, required the maintenance of good Anglo-Soviet relations on the lines of the treaty of 1942, and that every possible effort (which meant, in practice, every possible concession) should be made to convince the Soviet Government of the sincerity of the British desire for collaboration. In view of the Russian attitude the Foreign Office could not be sure that the Russians really wanted collaboration—which would imply concessions on their side—but the British were prepared to act on the view that nothing would be lost and a great deal might be gained by assuming Russian sincerity.

In some respects the Foreign Office held longer than the Prime Minister to this assumption. They were readier to acquiesce in the Russian control of the states of south-east Europe—excluding Greece—partly because it was physically impossible for Great Britain to prevent this control, and therefore imprudent for her to become engaged in an attempt to do so. The Foreign Office were also more conscious than the Prime Minister of the dismal history of representative institutions and the treatment of minorities in these States, and less inclined to think that notwithstanding the poverty and confusion of Europe matters would be much better after the defeat of Germany if only the Russians did not interfere. Moreover, as Sir A. Clark Kerr—a very shrewd observer—pointed out from Moscow as late as March, 1945, however 'disappointing and even disturbing' the attitude of the Soviet Government might be, they did not seem to have given up all idea of collaborating with the Western Powers

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister reported optimistically to the War Cabinet after the Yalta Conference about the prospects of post-war collaboration with Russia; his optimism, however, was not unqualified, and rested, as before, largely on the belief (which was shared by other members of the British Delegation) that Stalin himself shewed more personal good will than his colleagues. The Prime Minister warned the War Cabinet that there might be a change if for any reason Stalin were no longer in control of Russian policy. Mr. Churchill had specially in mind that Stalin had kept to his undertaking to regard Greece as within the British sphere of influence.



after the war. Their policy of establishing Soviet influence in the Balkans was one of limited objectives which did not endanger British interests. They would not give way as far as these limited objectives were concerned; on the other hand they wanted British support against a possible revival of German aggression.

The fact that he was in close touch with two other Heads of Governments in the Grand Alliance who had centralised in themselves the power of decision almost inevitably brought the Prime Minister to treat the whole field of foreign affairs as within his immediate province, although circumstances—the emergence of liberated States—were at last allowing the Foreign Office to resume its ordinary place in the conduct of policy. Mr. Churchill was still concentrating on the decisions to be taken in the military field where his grasp of detail was unrivalled. He was less concerned as yet with the manifold and remoter—one might almost say quieter—calculations upon which long-range foreign policy must be based. Moreover he was not easily open to persuasion. His closest personal friends were men of forceful character, but without his unmatched political insight. He was, as ever, most careful of his constitutional position and of constitutional practice. No man since Mr. Gladstone has dominated Parliament so magnificently. There was perhaps some danger in this remarkable control, even though Mr. Churchill, again like Mr. Gladstone, was most sensitive to the rights and opinions of the House of Commons. It would, however, be wrong to say that the Prime Minister disregarded expert advice from the Foreign Office or that he encroached upon its functions; nevertheless a good deal of the time and energy of the Foreign Secretary—and, still more, of the Permanent Under-Secretary<sup>1</sup> and the staff of the Office—was taken up in efforts to persuade him that not all his proposals were suited to British interests, or adequate to meet the many important factors in a situation.

The differences of outlook and emphasis between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office were concerned occasionally with the actions of individuals—the most important case of this kind was the prolonged refusal of Mr. Churchill to agree to a change of British representation in the Levant States when the Foreign Office regarded

<sup>1</sup> The fact—in itself salutary—that Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden left London whenever possible for week-ends at their respective country houses did not lessen the labours of the Permanent Under-Secretary whose chances of rest were too often broken by telephone calls giving the 'sudden thoughts' of one or both of these Ministers. The Foreign Office staff also found some cause of strain in the Prime Minister's urgent demands for drafts of important telegrams. Thus one of the most hard-pressed senior members of the staff commented in April, 1944: 'We are nearly always working [on the question of joint Anglo-American action with regard to Spanish exports of wolfram from Germany] with a margin of minutes. For example, the reply to the last message to the President had to be drafted between 11.15 a.m. and midday today when the Prime Minister left for Chequers. Similarly a brief drawn up for the Cabinet was finished only five minutes before the Cabinet meeting.'



such a change as essential to the establishment of good relations with the Free French. In a larger issue—the transfer of British support from General Mihailovic to Marshal Tito—there is perhaps room for doubt. It may well be that, owing to the deep-rooted bitterness of internal political disputes in Yugoslavia, especially between Serbs and Croats, and the general dislike of the pre-1941 régime, the British Government could not have adopted at any time a policy which would have avoided the alternatives either of civil war or of the totalitarian—or at least dictatorial—rule of one party in the country after the invaders had been turned out. It is also possible to hold, as the Foreign Office was inclined to think, that, on balance, neither General Mihailovic nor Marshal Tito was of very great military value to the Allies since each—while wanting the defeat of Germany and Italy—was concerned at least as much with internal political feuds, and preoccupied with securing a dominant position in the control of Yugoslavia after the war.

At all events the papers in the Foreign Office archives suggest that the Prime Minister may have listened too readily to the opinions of a few advisers of whose opportunities for obtaining full evidence the Foreign Office was less sure. Resistance in Yugoslavia was a military matter, and the decision about the military advantages or disadvantages to be gained from the support of Marshal Tito rested primarily upon the recommendations of the military authorities, but Marshal Tito's advocates with the Prime Minister seemed to the Foreign Office inclined to disregard the extenuating circumstances in the case of General Mihailovic's failure to act against the enemy, and the political risks of supporting a Communist dictatorship anywhere in south-east Europe. These matters were not easy to judge.<sup>1</sup> After an interview with Marshal Tito the Prime Minister somewhat changed his own view. He wrote to Mr. Eden about the responsibility which would rest on Great Britain if Marshal Tito, having secured control of Yugoslavia, used the arms which he had obtained from British sources to suppress his non-Communist opponents. Mr. Eden's answer was that the Foreign Office was well aware of the danger, and that not they, but the Prime Minister himself, had 'pushed' Marshal Tito.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been pointed out that the terms 'resistance' and 'collaboration' acquired a moral significance during the second World War which they had not possessed in the first war. One reason was the existence of a 'collaborationist' government in France, and that of Quisling in Norway, for which there was no parallel in the first war. The change was also due to the nature of 'total war', the illegal demands made by the Axis Powers upon the countries in their occupation, the savagely oppressive character of this occupation, and the widespread organisation of underground activities.

<sup>2</sup> It is typical of the Prime Minister's quick and masterful judgment that in another case of disagreement with the Foreign Office—the question of the regency of Archbishop Damaskinos in Greece at the end of 1944—he changed his mind at once after a personal meeting with the Archbishop in Athens. The Prime Minister took this journey to Athens—in mid-winter—though he was overwhelmed with business at the time owing to the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes.

In his attitude towards General de Gaulle the Prime Minister seemed at times to the Foreign Office to shew less than his usual generosity, and also to come near to risking British long-term interests in order to meet a certain prejudice on the part of President Roosevelt. Before 1943 Mr. Churchill had become impatient with General de Gaulle, though he never ceased to respect him. General de Gaulle was responsible for this exasperation. He spoke, wrote, and acted too often with a disregard for political and military realities—British and French—and with an abruptness of manner which could not be excused by the fact that he was causing offence not to the weak but to the strong. General de Gaulle had not even the justification that within the narrow field open to him he was doing his utmost for the Allied cause. He was not always a good judge of men, and not able to prevent intrigue within his own Movement. For very different—and prouder—reasons he was as obstinate as Marshal Pétain in refusing to face the humiliating but inevitable consequences of French surrender. Marshal Pétain assumed that, having accepted the armistice, France would be left free to work out her own regeneration through suffering. General de Gaulle assumed that, having rejected the armistice, the Free French could maintain the honour and integrity of France by a complete separation from the Vichy defeatists. Marshal Pétain ignored the facts that the Germans could not leave France alone, and had no interest in the moral regeneration of Frenchmen. General de Gaulle, in expecting the Allies to subordinate all other considerations to the maintenance of French honour in his Movement, forgot at times that, however lofty his claims, he could not undo the facts of surrender, and that the recovery of France would be achieved not by French but by British and American arms.

The Prime Minister had shewn a noble sympathy with France in the great distress of 1940. He has also described General de Gaulle in discerning terms.<sup>1</sup> During the war he was for a long time very tolerant of the General's obstinacy and his exaggeration, or so it seemed, of the immediate requirements of French sovereignty, but he came understandably, though without full cause, to distrust and suspect his political aims, and was not very willing to use his personal influence with Mr. Roosevelt to try to change the latter's attitude towards the Free French. On the other hand, the President, and, for a long time, Mr. Hull refused to see the Vichy politicians and collaborationists among the *haute bourgeoisie* for what they were. The United States Government were not well informed about French opinion generally by Admiral Leahy during his time as Ambassador at Vichy, and the President paid too much attention to the Admiral's reports. Nonetheless there is something remarkable

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, IV, 611.

in the American insensitiveness to the fineness of General de Gaulle's conception of his Movement and to the shame which the Vichy Government had brought upon France.

The American failure to realise the point of honour—the honour of France which General de Gaulle claimed to have in his keeping—had its worst consequences in the clumsy deal made with Admiral Darlan at the time of the North African invasion. Here again it is possible to argue, though the point can be disputed on military grounds, that the recognition of Darlan's 'legitimate' authority saved many British and American lives at a most critical moment in the campaign. The damning fact, however, as General de Gaulle and British opinion saw it, was that the American military chiefs and their political advisers did not seem to realise that they were surrendering on a matter of principle, and that the surrender would look like a betrayal of the cause for which the European Allies were fighting.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister, in view of his wish to avoid, whenever possible, differences with the President, and owing to his own experience of General de Gaulle's intransigence, inclined to under-rate the effect of the Darlan episode upon the General's behaviour, if indeed this behaviour was more ungracious after than it was before the end of 1942. The documents shew that the Foreign Office had more sympathy with General de Gaulle in spite of his relentless suspicions of British policy. The Foreign Office realised more quickly the change which had come over the Gaullist Movement after the Free French began to make closer contact with the Resistance groups in France. The political situation was now more favourable to the transformation of the Free French National Committee, under General de Gaulle's leadership, from a dissident group into something like a genuine Provisional Government. With the German move into the occupied zone, the Vichy Government lost even the shadow of independence; Marshal Pétain's programme of 'regeneration' was already discredited. De Gaulle had been right, and Pétain wrong in their respective forecasts. Neither the Allies nor the majority of Frenchmen wanted a Communist government in France after the war. General Giraud, whom the Americans had expected to take a lead in North Africa, was a failure and totally unsuited either for military or political command. There was thus no alternative to General de Gaulle if he secured the support of the Resistance Movements.

One of the sharper differences between the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden arose out of the recognition of this change, and of the

<sup>1</sup> A Foreign Office memorandum sent to Lord Halifax in Washington summed up the matter in these words: 'We are fighting for international decency, and Darlan is the antithesis of this.'

subsequent claim of the French Committee that before the cross-Channel invasion the Allies should negotiate with them an agreement which would recognise their control of civil affairs in liberated France. The Foreign Office, and, for that matter, General Eisenhower, as Commander-in-Chief of the cross-Channel expedition, regarded the early conclusion of such an agreement as necessary for military as well as political reasons. The State Department, including at long last, Mr. Hull, came round to this view early in 1944, but the President remained unwilling to face the facts, and, for some considerable time, the Prime Minister refused to assert firmly the British point of view and to reject the President's instruction to General Eisenhower to deal with any authority in France (other than Vichy) whom he might think fit to employ. Mr. Duff Cooper—to the Prime Minister's annoyance—described the President's action as a deliberate insult to the French Committee. Mr. Eden was finally able to persuade the Prime Minister to approve of a compromise which saved the situation with the French and enabled the President to climb down without loss of prestige.<sup>1</sup>

It is important, however, to remember that, apart from the immediate strain of the pre-invasion period (the documents show the deep anxiety of the Prime Minister during this time), the Foreign Office was more free than the Prime Minister to put long-range considerations affecting the post-war situation in Europe before matters of immediate military relevance. The Prime Minister—and not the Foreign Office—had been carrying the burden of persuading the President and the American Chiefs of Staff to accept military proposals which on the British side seemed essential to the success of the expedition. Mr. Churchill knew that these arguments between Allies would not end with the liberation of France; he was unwilling to expend his capital of good will with the President on issues which he did not consider of the first importance. The Foreign Office, on the other hand, as soon as they were released from conducting what might be called the diplomacy of survival, reasoned and planned by habit in terms of the long-range political interests of Great Britain.

This difference of outlook is clear in another field of action, or at all events discussion. In 1943, and through most of 1944, the Prime Minister was unwilling and indeed unable to give much thought to the post-war settlement of Europe and problems of the international organisation of security. His general opinion was that these problems

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister did not expect the Allies to hold at first more than a small area of French territory. For this reason he considered that the question of civil administration could be settled after the Allies had landed in France. During the final stages of this controversy General de Gaulle himself behaved with a lack of tact and an odd misunderstanding of the strength of his own position.

could not be decided in any detail until after the Allied victory had been assured. He was therefore willing to consider them only to the extent to which pressure from the United States and, to a lesser degree, the Dominions and the smaller European Allies compelled him to do so. He held strong but vague opinions about the conditions to be imposed upon Germany, and equally strong views about the need for European unity. He was also determined not to surrender any part of the British Empire to an international trusteeship; one of his reasons for not wanting to oppose President Roosevelt on matters which he (the Prime Minister) regarded as secondary was that he expected to have to resist American proposals hostile to the recovery of British territory.

The Foreign Office developed, in a somewhat haphazard way, efficient machinery in 1943 and 1944 for considering the question of a post-war security organisation to take the place of the League of Nations. Their proposals were ably worked out with a view to avoiding the faults of procedure which had contributed so much to the weakness and collapse of the League. The major premise in all these plans was that it was desirable to accept, in the more optimistic formula that peace was indivisible, the grim conclusion that wars could no longer be localised. In any case it was clear that the United States would not come into an organisation unless it were world-wide.

The Prime Minister accepted this major premise. He was more concerned, however, in practice, with re-establishing the importance of Europe in the balance of world power, and, at the same time, maintaining the closest Anglo-American co-operation. He was much attracted by pre-war proposals for the establishment of a United States of Europe, and believed that only through such means, including the federation of the smaller States, Great Britain and Western Europe generally would be able to deal on equal terms with the immense 'continental' resources of the U.S.S.R. and the United States.<sup>1</sup> His plan therefore was to set up a World Council based on subordinate Councils of Europe, the Americas, and the Pacific. He described the arrangement as a kind of 'three-legged stool', and, in order to secure the essential co-operation of the United States in European affairs, suggested American membership of the Council of Europe.

The Prime Minister broadcast his ideas in March, 1943, and argued in favour of them during his visit to Washington in May. The President was at first attracted by the plan, but from the point of view of American public opinion there was an important difference between the participation of the United States in a World Security

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister was influenced by Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas on pan-European union.

Organisation, and membership of a European Council involving direct and continuous interference in European affairs.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office on the other hand thought that these proposals for Europe were not in British interests; they would cause great suspicion in the U.S.S.R., and would lead, sooner or later, to a renewed German domination of the Continental States outside Russia. This difference of view involved a good deal of argument of which the Prime Minister was somewhat impatient. He was willing to leave the question of a World Organisation to discussions at an official level—which committed none of the governments concerned—and to await a meeting with President Roosevelt and Stalin at an easier time before taking any binding decisions.

For similar reasons Mr. Churchill was disinclined in 1943 and 1944 to give much consideration to the plans put forward for the future of Germany. At the Casablanca meeting early in 1943 he had acquiesced in the statement by the President that the Allies would demand the unconditional surrender of Germany. It is now known—though Mr. Churchill did not know it at the time—that this statement was not an *impromptu* move by the President, and that he had been considering it before he left Washington. The Prime Minister consulted the War Cabinet by telegram about the expediency of such a demand, and suggested that it might be applied to Germany and Japan, but not to Italy. Mr. Attlee replied on behalf of the War Cabinet in favour both of the use of the term and the extension of it to include Italy.

It has been argued that, whatever the advantages of this formula in leaving the Allies free to decide upon the conditions to be applied to the Germans after their surrender, the early announcement of the demand was a tactical mistake and that it left the Allies no room for manoeuvre and the peoples of the enemy countries no motive for getting rid of their governments. In fact the Italians did get rid of their fascist government when they realised that the invasion of the mainland of Italy was certain, and, although unconditional surrender was enforced on them, they knew that, by 'working their passage' on the Allied side, they would obtain—considering their heavy responsibilities—not overharsh terms. The satellite States also surrendered on terms which were not in practice unconditional, though, except in the case of Finland, the terms of surrender were much less significant than the military circumstances which allowed a Russian occupation and control. In Japan there was no chance of a successful movement for the overthrow of the government, and when at last the unexpected and terrible weapon of the atomic bomb brought a rapid

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hull, whose main purpose, as far as concerned post-war organisation, was to secure the removal of trade barriers, was afraid that a large and powerful European organisation might develop an economic policy for Europe which would be damaging to American trade interests.



Japanese surrender, the Allies agreed not to require the deposition of the Emperor.

In Germany the failure of the military *coup* against Hitler in July, 1944, was not connected with the demand for unconditional surrender. A second *coup* was unlikely at least until Nazi control had been broken by military defeat. The Nazi leaders knew that they could expect no mercy for themselves—they deserved none—and no future for their régime. In the final stages of the war the overwhelming sentiment of the Germans was not so much anxiety about the consequences of unconditional surrender to the Western Allies as fear—amounting to panic—of the revenge which the Russians would take on German territory for the crimes committed by the Germans themselves in Russia.

Thus nothing in the course of events suggests that the Nazi control of Germany lasted longer owing to the Allied demand for unconditional surrender. The Prime Minister indeed in 1943 and 1944 regarded this demand as likely to be less alarming to the Germans than the publication of the actual terms already under discussion on the Allied side. Finally the demand for unconditional surrender was also a consequence of the endless German harping on the treaty of Versailles. The Allies did not intend to repeat the error of 1918 when they had accepted a German surrender on unnecessarily vague political terms to which the Germans subsequently gave their own interpretation.

In view of his care not to commit himself to any particular statement about the terms to be imposed on Germany after surrender, it is surprising that the Prime Minister should have given even a tentative approval to a drastic American proposal not only that Germany should be dismembered politically but that she should be transformed into a country 'primarily agricultural and pastoral in its character'. This proposal was made to the President shortly before the Quebec Conference of 1944 by Mr. Morgenthau. The plan provided that all the industrial equipment of the Ruhr not already destroyed during the war should be dismantled or removed. The mines would be completely wrecked, and the whole region 'so weakened and controlled' that it could not 'in the foreseeable future' again become industrialised.

President Roosevelt and the Prime Minister gave a general assent on September 15, 1944, to this plan for the 'pastoralisation' of Germany. During the discussion Mr. Churchill was mainly concerned with the future of Lend-Lease after the defeat of Germany, and the grave economic situation in which Great Britain would certainly be placed after the war. Mr. Morgenthau's proposal was



put to him as part of a general arrangement which would allow British economic recovery. Mr. Eden, who was not present when the President and the Prime Minister discussed the plan,<sup>1</sup> pointed out to Mr. Churchill the calamitous effects which the proposal would have not only in Germany but in the rest of Europe. Mr. Hull and Mr. Stimson were equally critical on the American side. There was no likelihood that the Allies would accept the plan; the tentative endorsement of it by the Prime Minister and the President would have mattered little if the main facts had not appeared almost at once in the American press. Although the leakage gave Nazi propaganda an opportunity to warn the German people what would happen to them after unconditional surrender, it was already clear that the Nazi leaders intended to fight to the last, and that until the final hours of defeat no group—military or civil—in Germany would be able to overthrow them. The Morgenthau plan thus had no effect in prolonging German resistance.<sup>2</sup>

After the practical repudiation of the Morgenthau plan the President gave instructions that for the time all detailed planning in the Department of State on the future of Germany should cease. The Prime Minister did not lay down any such rule for the Foreign Office, but, in effect, until the Allies had decided at least in the most general terms what they intended to do the Foreign Office could not go beyond the preparation of memoranda. They assumed that there would be a peace conference at which post-war questions hitherto held in suspense would be discussed. The Foreign Office also agreed with the Prime Minister on the expediency of postponing, as far as possible, all disputable matters, and especially territorial claims, until this discussion had taken place. Any other policy might have meant either a serious crisis with the Soviet Government (involving—as a consequence which the Allies could not exclude—the possibility of a separate peace between the U.S.S.R. and Germany) or a surrender to all the Russian demands.

On the other hand the weak point in the policy of delay, as the Prime Minister came increasingly to realise, was that, combined with the American failure to understand the significance of the question of a post-war balance of power in Europe, it allowed the Russians to obtain practical possession or control of such large areas in Europe that no decisions other than those desired by the Soviet Government were likely to be taken when a Peace Conference met. In the circumstances, however, the dangers of a large-scale *fait*

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister was influenced by Lord Cherwell's support of the plan. The Foreign Office was sharply critical of Lord Cherwell's activities in connection with it.

<sup>2</sup> The President—with the American elections close at hand—could not risk any charge that he was treating Germany too leniently. He did not repudiate the Morgenthau plan, but said in a speech of October 21, 1944, that the Allies were not planning to enslave the German people.

*accompli* had to be accepted, though they might perhaps have been lessened in the critical three months before the Potsdam Conference if the Americans had approved of Mr. Churchill's proposals for standing on the farthest lines of military advance. As things were, the main hope was that the Russians themselves would continue to see advantages in co-operation and in common membership of a World Security Organisation directed primarily against a recurrence of German and Japanese aggression. The Allies also continued to reckon on their bargaining power, especially in the form of economic aid and the allocation of German reparation in kind from the industrial zone in the west, which they could use in discussions with the Soviet Government.

The Foreign Office, while regarding the Prime Minister's far-reaching schemes for the integration of Europe as impracticable, had been concerned since the end of 1942 with the provision of machinery for the immediate purpose of meeting the confusion—and the risks of chaos and anarchy—certain to occur at the end of the war. In order to secure a common policy, and, in particular, to prevent unilateral action by the Russians, the Foreign Office had put forward at the beginning of 1943 a proposal for a United Nations Commission for Europe. At the Moscow Conference in 1943 Mr. Eden took the lead in bringing these practical questions to an issue, and suggested the establishment of a European Advisory Commission.

The Foreign Office appointed one of their ablest officials—Sir William Strang—to represent Great Britain on this Commission. The primary business of the Commission was to draw up the detailed terms of surrender to be imposed upon Germany, and to settle the arrangements for the Allied occupation and control of the country (and, where relevant, Austria). The Commission carried out this work, and attempted, less successfully, to deal with armistice terms imposed on the satellite States. The Commission was not asked to consider the general post-war problems of Germany or of the rest of Europe, but throughout 1944, it might have been able to do something to clear and define Allied policy, and indeed to carry out its more limited tasks less slowly if the Soviet Government had been less obstructive and the United States Government had given more positive backing. Mr. Winant, who represented the United States on the Commission, nearly always supported Sir William Strang; the President rarely allowed him to take the initiative in making proposals.

The Prime Minister, although he could spare little of his time for matters not directly concerned with defeating the enemy, had set up a Cabinet Committee in August, 1943, for the consideration of

armistice and immediate post-war problems.<sup>1</sup> The committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister, did much useful work in calling for memoranda and in co-ordinating the activities of a number of departmental committees engaged in studying particular aspects of the post-war situation. It provided instructions for the British representative on the European Advisory Commission. It was also of considerable negative value in giving an opportunity for some of its own members to bring forward proposals about Germany which did not stand up to close analysis. Even so, the most decisive document submitted to the War Cabinet on the treatment of Germany was a memorandum from the Treasury. In this memorandum, which was drawn up after the Yalta Conference, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Anderson, pointed out the incompatibility between the proposals put forward for reparation and those for the dismemberment of Germany, and the danger that, if the Russians had their way, much of the burden of German reparation would in fact fall upon the British people.

This history of war-time diplomacy ends with the Potsdam Conference, and the surrender of Japan. The Allies had won the war, but were in disagreement about the purposes to which they would put their victory. In anticipating what he had described to President Truman as a 'show-down' at the tripartite Conference, Mr. Churchill had contemplated a good deal of plain speaking, and also a final bargain, at which, after much manoeuvring, the British and Americans would exact concession for concession to the full extent of their power. The bargaining took place, as Mr. Churchill had expected, but the critical point was not reached until after he and Mr. Eden had left Potsdam. The final compromise was proposed by Mr. Byrnes. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin accepted it, though with misgivings, especially in regard to Poland.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill—writing some eight years later<sup>3</sup>—has said that he would never have conceded the western Neisse frontier to Poland, and that, if necessary, he would have had a 'public break' over the matter.<sup>4</sup> It is most probable that, if he had remained at the Conference, he would have tried to get more from Russia in return for the very large concessions made

<sup>1</sup> This committee, which continued the work of an *ad hoc* committee dealing with the immediate terms of surrender for Italy, was given wider terms of reference in April, 1944, and was known from that date as the Armistice and Post-War Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bevin made a strong—and shrewd—attempt to do what he could to safeguard the freedom of elections in Poland.

<sup>3</sup> Churchill, VI, 581–2.

<sup>4</sup> Technically Mr. Byrnes' proposal did not make this concession, since the final delimitation of the frontier was left to the Peace Conference. In fact the concession was made by allowing the Polish claims to extend their administration to the western Neisse (see below, Chapter XXXI, section (vi)).

to her. How far would he have succeeded? He had been unable to persuade the Americans to accept his view of the need to meet at once the grave threat from the U.S.S.R. to the future of Europe and the peace of the world. British views now counted for less than at any time in American decisions. Anglo-American relations expressed in terms of power had changed to the disadvantage of Great Britain. In spite of her victories and her armies, which were beginning to melt away, Great Britain was, temporarily at least, near to the end of her resources and dependent economically upon American help to tide over the period of recovery.<sup>1</sup>

The President and his advisers were conscious of the world predominance of the United States and of their ability—and perhaps their duty—to take decisions for themselves; they were also dangerously sure that they knew what was best for Great Britain and Europe. At all events they took their decisions, and with a certain impatience that, whatever they did for Europeans, must be done once for all, and must not commit them to perpetual interference in the domestic affairs of a Continent which, for historical reasons, they distrusted.

The difficulty of speculating on what might have happened at the Potsdam Conference if Mr. Churchill had been returned to office is increased by the need to ask another question. What would have happened at Potsdam if the Japanese surrender had taken place three weeks earlier? In such case the Russians would have lost a great deal of their bargaining power since their aid would no longer have been needed in the war against Japan, and the Americans would have had less reason to avoid committing themselves further to action in Europe on behalf of their own principles and of the kind of settlement which they regarded as likely to ensure peace. The news of the successful explosion of an atomic bomb in the New Mexican desert was reported to the Prime Minister at Potsdam on July 17, the opening day of the Conference. The President and the Prime Minister discussed together the most tactful way of letting Stalin know something which they had previously concealed from him. Mr. Truman told Stalin the news in the presence of Mr. Churchill. Mr. Churchill does not think that Stalin realised the significance of this new weapon. The weapon changed the balance of military power, at least for a time, overwhelmingly in favour of the western Allies. If Hitler had developed the atomic bomb, the Allies would have lost the war. If the Russians had possessed it, they would

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<sup>1</sup> A paper submitted to the War Cabinet on August 14, 1945—the day before the Japanese surrender, and three days before Mr. Truman gave instructions that Lend-Lease should end in a fortnight—stated that, without substantial new aid from the United States, Great Britain would be ‘virtually bankrupt, and the economic basis for the hopes of the public non-existent’. Sir W. K. Hancock and M. M. Gowing. *British War Economy*. 1952 (History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series), pp. 546-9.

probably have made it their final political argument. It is outside the task of a historian of British diplomacy during the war to consider whether use might have been made at the Potsdam Conference, or after, of this *ultima ratio* of the western democracies in warning the Soviet Government that the western Powers could compel them to fulfil the agreements made at Yalta, and that the Russian *glacis* of puppet States had lost much of its military value. A warning of such gravity, with such a sanction attached to it, would have been out of keeping with all the habits and hopes of the western democracies, and the implementation of any threat—when the Allies had added to their store of the weapons—would hardly have been practicable politically in view of the attitude of public opinion in the United States and Great Britain. As for the moral implications of any threat of ultimate force, the historian can give no answer. He would be prudent to limit himself to one of the very few generalisations which apply inevitably, and, as it may seem, blindly to the fate of all nations at all times: "Ὅψε θεῶν ἀλέουσι μύλοι, ἀλέουσι δὲ λεπτά<sup>1</sup>."

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<sup>1</sup> The mills of the gods grind late, but they grind small.

## CHAPTER I

### The alignment of forces, September-December 1939

#### (i)

*The German attack on Poland: British and French notes of September 1, 1939, to Germany: Italian proposal for a conference: British and French differences about the time-limit to an ultimatum: British and French notes of September 3 to Germany.*

WHEN the British Cabinet met shortly before noon on September 1, 1939, the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, used the words: 'Our consciences are clear, and there should be no possible doubt where our duty lies.'<sup>1</sup> The situation brought about by the German attack on Poland was indeed different in one all-important respect from that of the previous autumn. During the long-drawn crisis over the Sudetenland, the British and French Governments had to decide whether they would allow Hitler to enforce demands which they thought unjust in substance and outrageous in the manner of their presentation. In March 1939, the decision to resist further German demands of a similar kind had been taken and announced. Thenceforward the choice between peace and war rested with Hitler. Great Britain and France were engaged to defend the independence of Poland against German aggression. If the Germans attacked Poland, they would be at war with the Western Powers.

The task of British diplomacy in the critical days and hours before September 1 was to try to restrain Hitler from bringing upon the world the calamity of such a war. The attempt to build up a European coalition against German aggression had failed, but the defection of Russia could not change the British decision. There was no question of giving way to Hitler because the task of defeating him was now more difficult.

The invasion of Poland began in the early hours of September 1. Great Britain did not declare war on Germany until September 3.<sup>2</sup> For the first twenty-four hours after the opening of the German

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chamberlain had begun by saying that the event against which we had fought so long and so earnestly had come upon us. One might notice a personal significance in the Prime Minister's employment of the term 'fought' to describe an effort not to win a war, but to avert it.

<sup>2</sup> For a documentary record of the negotiations between September 1 and the British declaration of war, see *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-39*, Series III, vol. VII, Chapter VII (H.M. Stationery Office, 1954).

attack there seemed to the Foreign Office a faint chance that, when he realised that the two Western Powers intended to fulfil their guarantee to Poland, Hitler might agree to a resumption of negotiations on terms which the British, French, and Polish Governments could accept. After twenty-four hours this faint chance of a peaceful settlement disappeared. A formal declaration of war followed, though it was delayed owing to the insistence of the French Government.

At their meeting just before noon<sup>1</sup> on September 1 the Cabinet agreed to send a communication to the German Government as soon as they had concerted action with the French. The Cabinet considered 5 p.m. as the best time for the communication. At 4.45 p.m. therefore Sir N. Henderson was instructed that he would receive a communication which he and the French Ambassador were to deliver at once. They were to ask for an immediate answer. In reply to any questions Sir N. Henderson could say that the communication was in the nature of a warning, and was not to be considered as an ultimatum. For his own information he was told that, if the German reply were unsatisfactory, the next stage would be either an ultimatum with a time-limit or a declaration of war.

The communication stated that by their action in attacking Poland, the German Government had 'created conditions' calling for the implementation of the Anglo-French guarantee to Poland. Then followed a warning that, unless the German Government gave satisfactory assurances that they had 'suspended all aggressive action against Poland' and were 'prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom' would 'without hesitation fulfil their obligations to Poland.' The French communication was in identical terms, but Ribbentrop refused to receive the Ambassadors together. He saw Sir N. Henderson at 9.30 p.m. He said that he would submit the communication to Hitler, and claimed that the Poles had invaded German territory on August 31.

Meanwhile the British Government also had to say something more to Mussolini about a proposal which he had made on August 31 for a conference. Mussolini had suggested that, if the British and French Governments would agree to the return of Danzig, he would ask Hitler to accept a conference 'for the revision of the clauses of the treaty of Versailles which were the cause of the present great troubles in the life of Europe'. Lord Halifax had replied by telephone to Ciano on August 31—apparently about 7 p.m.—that he had discussed the proposal with the Prime Minister and that we could not ask the Poles to give up Danzig in advance of negotiation. The Poles

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<sup>1</sup> The news of the German attack on Poland had reached London earlier, but Ministers were engaged until noon in the departmental work necessary for putting war measures into effect.



had agreed to a general discussion with the German Government. There was no reason why the Germans should not give their proposals—'if, indeed, they had any'—to the Polish Ambassador.

M. Daladier had told Sir E. Phipps, British Ambassador in Paris, at 3.30 p.m. that he had instructed the French Ambassador to let the Prime Minister know that he would rather resign than accept this 'invitation to a second "Munich"'. On the evening of August 31, however, M. Bonnet told Sir E. Phipps that the French Council of Ministers felt that they could not decline 'off-hand' the Italian proposal. They would probably reply with an acceptance of the proposal on the conditions that Poland should take part in it and that it should have a wider agenda. At 9 p.m. M. Bonnet telephoned to M. Corbin, French Ambassador in London, that, if direct German-Polish negotiations failed, the French would accept the proposal on these two conditions.

On the morning of September 1 Sir P. Loraine, British Ambassador in Rome, was instructed to say to Ciano that, in view of Hitler's attack on Poland, it seemed impossible to go further with Mussolini's proposal. Ciano answered that he would ask Mussolini whether in the changed circumstances he could telephone the proposal to Hitler. Ciano appeared to think that the French were more favourable to the plan than the British. There was in fact a divergence (for which the Foreign Office regarded M. Bonnet as responsible) between the respective attitudes of the two governments. The French had sent their reply to the Italian Government at 11.45 a.m. on September 1 without any reference to the German attack on Poland. Later in the day M. Bonnet telephoned to London that the Italian Government still thought it possible, if they had British and French consent, to revive their proposal for a conference; they asked whether the French had Polish approval for the plan. M. Bonnet—without consulting the British Government—had enquired about the Polish attitude. M. Beck had replied that since Poland was at war as the result of unprovoked aggression, the need was not for a conference, but for common action by the Allies against this aggression. The Polish reply did not reach M. Bonnet until the afternoon of September 2, but the French Government issued a statement during the night of September 1-2 that they (the French) had given a 'positive' reply to the 'Italian initiative'.

The Germans did not answer the warning note of September 1. Hence the British Government had to concert with the French the ultimatum which was the inevitable consequence of the German refusal to suspend hostilities and withdraw their troops from Poland. Here again there were divergences of view about a time-table. Sir E. Phipps telephoned at 9.35 a.m. on September 2 that the French

Parliament was meeting in the afternoon, and that proceedings might take longer than had been expected. The Foreign Office replied at 11.55 a.m. to Sir E. Phipps that the delays in Paris and the attitude of the French Government were causing some misgiving in London, and that they hoped Sir E. Phipps could 'infuse courage and determination into M. Bonnet'.

Sir E. Phipps reported at 12.45 p.m. that the French Government agreed with the statement (telephoned to them) which the British Government proposed to make in Parliament. At 1.30 p.m. he reported that the French also agreed that in the afternoon of September 2, after the meeting of the Chamber, the British and French Ambassadors should present identical notes containing an ultimatum to the German Government. They strongly urged a period of 48 hours before the expiry of the ultimatum in order to allow time for French mobilisation and for the evacuation of large towns.

A quarter of an hour before the time (2.45 p.m.) at which the British statement was to be made in Parliament, Ciano telephoned to London that the Italian Government still thought that a conference was possible. Sir P. Loraine then took Ciano's place at the telephone. He said that the Italian Ambassador in Berlin had told Ribbentrop that Mussolini believed that, if Hitler would suspend hostilities and agree to a conference, Great Britain and France would accept the plan, and obtain Polish agreement to it. The Ambassador had now reported that Hitler would not refuse to consider the plan if the British and French notes were not to be regarded as an ultimatum. Sir N. Henderson had authorised the Italian Ambassador to say that the British note did not have the character of an ultimatum. Ribbentrop wanted Sir N. Henderson's statement to be confirmed. He also asked that Germany should have time, for example, up to noon on September 3, to consider the proposal. Ciano had put these points to M. Bonnet who had agreed to each of them (i.e. M. Bonnet had not stipulated for the withdrawal of the German armies). Lord Halifax replied to Sir P. Loraine that he felt sure that the British Government would insist on the withdrawal of German troops from Polish territory. Ciano did not think it possible to secure this withdrawal.

The statement in the House of Commons was now postponed in order to allow time for discussions with the French over Ciano's proposals. Lord Halifax telephoned about 4 p.m. to M. Bonnet. M. Bonnet thought that Hitler would not accept the withdrawal of German troops and that the essential point was that Poland should be represented at the conference. On this condition M. Bonnet thought that a conference should be considered. We ought to do everything to convince public opinion that we had tried our utmost to avoid war. M. Bonnet then asked that our eventual ultimatum should contain a time-limit of 48 hours.

The Cabinet met again at 4.15 p.m. They agreed with Mr. Chamberlain that we should insist upon the withdrawal of German troops as a preliminary condition of a conference, and that we should require a reply from the Germans at the latest by midnight on September 2-3. Sir A. Cadogan telephoned these decisions to M. Bonnet at 5 p.m. M. Bonnet said that the French Government were about to consider (*va délibérer*) whether the retirement of the German troops should be a necessary condition of the French acceptance of the proposal for a conference. M. Bonnet argued very strongly that an ultimatum should have a 48-hours time-limit. Sir A. Cadogan said that the British Government intended to fulfil their obligations to Poland if Hitler had not replied by midnight on September 2-3. M. Bonnet answered that, if the British Government insisted on this time, they would incur a heavy responsibility since French evacuation<sup>1</sup> would not be completed for another two days. The French Cabinet would come to a decision about a time-limit by 9 p.m. Sir A. Cadogan asked whether 9 p.m. was the earliest hour at which the British Government could be told of the decision. M. Bonnet then said 'perhaps 8 p.m.'

At 6 p.m. Lord Halifax telephoned to Sir E. Phipps that the line taken by the French Government was 'very embarrassing'. Sir E. Phipps was instructed to see M. Daladier, and to try to persuade him that the ultimatum should expire at midnight on September 2-3. Shortly after 6.30 p.m. Lord Halifax telephoned to Ciano. He put the condition about the withdrawal of the German troops, and added that Danzig must also revert to the *status quo* of two days earlier. Ciano said that Hitler could not accept the condition about the withdrawal of troops. At 9 p.m. M. Bonnet told Ciano that the French would also insist on this condition. Later in the evening Ciano informed the British and French Ambassadors that, in view of the conditions attached by Great Britain and France to the acceptance of his proposal, Mussolini had decided not to take any further steps in the matter.

There remained, therefore, only the question of the time-limit. The Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons at 7.44 p.m. He reported Mussolini's proposal, the conditions which the Cabinet had laid down for acceptance, and the fact that we were still in communication with the French about a time-limit. The statement was badly received, and the delay in fixing a time-limit largely misinterpreted as a sign of weakness and of hesitation to fulfil the guarantee to Poland. The Prime Minister and Lord Halifax met at once to consider the situation. The Foreign Office had also heard at 8 p.m. from Sir H. Kennard, British Ambassador at Warsaw, that he and the French Ambassador had been told by

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the evacuation of women and children from the towns.

M. Beck that the Polish armies were suffering from German superiority in the air. M. Beck hoped that we should soon enter the war and find it possible to draw off a considerable proportion of the German aircraft on the Polish front. At 9.50 p.m. the Prime Minister telephoned to M. Daladier that it would be impossible to obtain agreement in Parliament for a 48-hour time-limit from midday on September 3. The Prime Minister proposed as a compromise that we should announce that our Ambassadors had been instructed to present an ultimatum at 8 a.m. on September 3, with a time-limit of four hours. M. Daladier thought it better to fix a time-limit of some hours after midday on September 3 in order to delay air attacks on the French armies.

Lord Halifax telephoned to M. Bonnet at 10.30 p.m. that we should have to make some announcement during the evening and to state a definite hour at which our ultimatum would expire. If the French could not accept our time-table, we suggested separate British action on the understanding that the French would follow within twenty-four hours. M. Bonnet 'gravely deplored' our proposal, but agreed that we should act at 8 a.m. and the French at midday. The Cabinet met at 11.30 p.m. and decided that our ultimatum should be presented at 9 a.m. with a two-hour limit. The French Government did not settle their time-table until September 3. At 8.45 a.m. on September 3 Sir E. Phipps reported that the time-limit would be 5 a.m. on September 4. Shortly after noon Sir E. Phipps sent a further message that the French Government had decided upon 5 p.m. on September 3. Meanwhile Sir N. Henderson carried out his instructions at 9 a.m. He found it difficult to make contact with Ribbentrop. Finally he was told that Dr. Schmidt, the official interpreter at the Ministry, was authorised to receive on Ribbentrop's behalf any communication which Sir N. Henderson might make. At 11 a.m.—the hour at which the ultimatum expired—Ribbentrop asked Sir N. Henderson to call on him. He gave Sir N. Henderson a long memorandum which attempted to justify the German attack on Poland.

(ii)

*The Russian invasion of Poland: British statement of September 19, 1939, on the Russian action: Hitler's peace offer of October 6: Mr. Chamberlain's speech of October 12.*

The Germans who had chosen war in 1939 had the initiative, except at sea, in waging it. The terrible consequences of the Allied loss of

the initiative were seen in the rapid German invasion of Poland, though it is fair to remember that the Allies themselves did not expect to escape from the ordeal of battle. They had anticipated heavy air attacks on their ill-defended centres of population, followed probably by an assault in force on the western front. The fate of the Poles was even more calamitous when on September 17 the Russians invaded Eastern Poland. At the outbreak of the war the Foreign Office inclined to think that, at all events for a time, the Russians would remain in isolation,<sup>1</sup> but that they might be willing to sell war material to Poland or allow the passage of British material to Poland through Russian territory. Sir W. Seeds, British Ambassador at Moscow, was asked to make indirect soundings in the matter; he found that there was little chance of getting Soviet consent to either suggestion.

A secret protocol attached to the Anglo-Polish treaty of alliance limited the British guarantee of assistance to the case of German aggression, but the British Government now had to consider whether they would or would not declare war on the U.S.S.R. War with the U.S.S.R. would not save Poland and might make the defeat of Germany more difficult by forcing the Russians into close alliance with Germany (and thus greatly weakening the effects of the Allied blockade), and by the diversion of Anglo-French forces to meet Russian attacks in the Near or Middle East. In these circumstances a note of protest to the Soviet Government was useless. The British Government confined itself to a statement, on September 19, that the Russian attack was unjustified. 'The full implication of these events' was 'not yet apparent', but we were determined to fulfil our obligations to Poland and to prosecute the war with all energy until our objects had been achieved.

These words were carefully chosen; they made it clear that the British Government did not intend to accept a new partition of Poland, and that they would not listen to any peace offers at Polish expense. The need for this clear statement was shown almost at once. On September 28 a Russo-German treaty established friendly relations between the two States on the basis of protecting their territorial gains against third parties. The Soviet Government promised to give Germany economic support and to consult with her regarding measures to be taken if Great Britain and France refused to bring the war to an end. The reference to consultation might imply that Russia intended to join Germany in the war. The Foreign Office were inclined to regard it as no more than a verbal support to Hitler's attempt to get peace on German terms. On

<sup>1</sup> The Russians, on the other hand, appear to have been surprised at the determination of the Allies. On September 2 M. Molotov had given the impression that he expected Great Britain and France to accept Italian mediation, and in any case, not to go to war

October 6 Hitler made an offer of negotiation in a speech which, as usual, failed entirely to measure the depth of feeling in Great Britain. His argument was that Great Britain and France had gone to war to save Poland. They had not saved Poland. Hence they had no reason to continue fighting.

The Foreign Office had evidence that Hitler and his entourage really believed that Great Britain might accept his offer. The War Cabinet did not even consider the possibility of accepting it. The only question was whether to make any reply to it. They decided to reply in order to reaffirm their position and to establish the fact that responsibility for the slaughter now to be expected in the west would rest with Germany. Mr. Chamberlain therefore spoke in this sense on October 12. Once again he avoided language which might have given the impression of assenting, even tentatively, to the idea of negotiation. He said that it was no part of British policy to exclude from her rightful place in Europe a Germany which could live in amity and confidence with other nations; he also stated plainly that we would not surrender to wrongdoing or agree to an uneasy truce interrupted by further threats.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I have not found it possible, within the scope of this short History, to record 'unofficial' German peace approaches which reached the British Government through various channels during this period. In some of the earlier overtures Göring was alleged to be, if not the prime mover, at least an interested party. Approaches were made by or on behalf of highly placed officers or civilians—individuals or groups—said to fear the outcome of the pact with the U.S.S.R. and to favour a compromise peace, the removal of Hitler, and the establishment of a moderate government in Germany. The Foreign Office could not decide easily how genuine or practical these approaches were. The emissaries seemed to exaggerate the influence of their party, or group; their 'terms', as far as they were ever defined, generally suggested that they wanted, or anyhow felt it necessary, if they were to get popular support, to keep most of the advantages gained by Hitler's career of treaty-breaking and aggression. Such offers thus appeared to come to little more than an invitation to Great Britain to buy peace at the sacrifice of the cause for which she was fighting and the Allies whom she had promised to defend. British policy towards these approaches was consistent. Approaches which seemed genuine were answered in terms of Mr. Chamberlain's statement of October 12, 1939; others were ignored.

Between the collapse of France and the failure of the German air force to prepare the way for the invasion of Great Britain, the suggestions continued at intervals. Hitler himself recommended the British Government to accept the situation and come to terms before it was too late. The speeches of Mr. Churchill and Lord Halifax, and, above all, the intensity of British preparations to meet invasion were an adequate reply. In 1941, when the offers were renewed, instructions were sent to the diplomatic posts where overtures had been made in the previous months that henceforward all such enquiries should receive no reply. The only exception was the Prime Minister's formal answer to the offer of mediation made, and withdrawn, by Mr. Matsuo (see below, p. 171).

In the late autumn of 1941, when Hitler was still advertising his 'New Order', the Foreign Office thought a public statement desirable to the effect that the British Government were not interested in any peace offer from Hitler and did not think that the peoples of Europe would accept the German programme. The Prime Minister, therefore, in a speech at the Mansion House on November 10, 1941, repeated the refusal to negotiate with Hitler on any terms. See also below, pp. 478-9.

## (iii)

*Belgian refusal to agree to staff conversations: Italian non-belligerency: the Anglo-Franco-Turkish treaty of October 19, 1939: French proposals for a Balkan bloc.*

After the rejection of Hitler's peace offer the general impression in Great Britain was that the Germans might use their initiative by attacking at once in the west, and that for a second time they would disregard the neutrality of Belgium. Hence on the British side the most important diplomatic action directly connected with military strategy was an attempt to persuade the Belgian King and Government to consent to staff conversations on the question of meeting a German attack. Great Britain and France had reaffirmed in April, 1937, their guarantee to Belgium, although Belgium was released from any obligation to France. The Allies, however, assumed that Belgium would resist a German invasion, and would call for Anglo-French assistance under the guarantee. The Allies would then send troops into the country, but the line which the troops would try to hold could not be improvised. In any case the British and French air forces would have to attack the German invaders. If they did not know the Belgian plans of defence they could not avoid the risk of bombing Belgian troops and civilian refugees on the roads.

Attempts to open staff conversations with the Belgians in February and May, 1939, had failed. The Chief of the Belgian General Staff and the Minister of Defence had been favourable to them; the King, his personal advisers, and the majority of the Cabinet feared that the Germans would hear of the conversations and treat them as a breach of Belgian neutrality. In June, 1939, the Belgian Government issued a statement that, in the event of a war, they intended to follow a policy of neutrality and that there was no question of establishing contacts with foreign General Staffs.

Early in September, 1939, the War Cabinet considered the advisability of sending a special emissary to Belgium and also of asking His Majesty the King to write a personal letter to King Leopold. On the advice of the Foreign Office this plan was given up, and the subject was raised, without success, through ordinary diplomatic channels. The Belgian attitude did not change during October. King Leopold even complained to the British Government, and personally in a letter to His Majesty the King, that we were inviting the Belgian Government to act dishonourably in holding staff conversations with us, and thereby going 'behind the back of the Germans who had equally guaranteed Belgian neutrality'. On November 7, however, the Belgian Prime Minister told Sir R. Clive, British Ambassador at Brussels, that a German attack on Belgium



and the Netherlands seemed imminent. The Dutch were even more disturbed. At the invitation of the Queen of the Netherlands, King Leopold and M. Spaak had gone to The Hague on the previous day, and had agreed to send a joint offer of mediation to the three belligerent Powers. M. Spaak said that this offer was an attempt to gain time.

On the evening of November 8 Sir R. Clive asked what the Belgian Government would do if the Dutch alone were attacked. M. Spaak asked what the Allies would do. Sir R. Clive replied by asking whether the Belgian Government would allow the passage of Allied troops across Belgian territory. M. Spaak thought that the Belgian Government would give their permission. Sir R. Clive asked why the Belgians had not made a move during the day to establish military contact with the Allies. M. Spaak said that he hoped contact would shortly be established, but that 'there was still opposition from a certain quarter.' On November 10, Sir R. Clive, in accordance with instructions from the Foreign Office, again raised with M. Spaak the question of co-ordinating plans with the Belgian military authorities in order that the Allies might be able to give effective support to the Belgians and the Dutch. The Belgians, however, drew back when the attack did not take place, and the German Government issued a communiqué that they would respect Belgian and Dutch neutrality as long as the two countries showed themselves capable of maintaining it. The War Cabinet then asked Admiral Sir R. Keyes, who was a personal friend of the Belgian royal family, to see the King in order to explain why we thought it important that Belgium should regard a German attack on the Netherlands as a *casus belli*. Neither the King nor M. Spaak would make a definite statement on the matter. The King said that in his view the decision would be affirmative, but that it could not be taken, and therefore could not be announced, before the Germans attacked. The King also hoped that he might go on trying to bring about an acceptable peace; the opening of negotiations would be in the interests of the Allies and of Belgium, since Hitler might be induced to delay his offensive.<sup>1</sup>

The Allies—as they were to discover not less disastrously in their dealings with the Scandinavian States—could do little or nothing to overcome the terror of the small States as long as the Germans held the initiative and were stronger in numbers and material than the Allies. The small States were playing for time in the hope that

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<sup>1</sup> The question of the line to which the Allies would advance in the event of a German attack on Belgium is outside the scope of this History. This question is fully discussed in *Grand Strategy*, II.

the war might come to an end or that the Allies would become so strong that the Germans would be forced to the defensive, and that small nations could then 'creep out into the sun again.' In the case of Belgium the Allies had at least the advantage that they were dealing with a friendly State which was unlikely to join the enemy. The position with regard to Italy and Japan was different.

During the first months of the war the danger of Japanese intervention was not great. The Russo-German agreement had shocked Japanese opinion. Japan was occupied in China, and even the Japanese military extremists, although reckless in their largest decisions, moved cautiously, and step by step, in actual tactics.<sup>1</sup> In the case of Italy the danger also did not seem immediate. There was no doubt about Mussolini's inclinations or his vindictiveness towards Great Britain as the country which had enforced sanctions against Italy. Furthermore, while an Allied victory might well mean the end of the fascist régime in Italy, a victory for the Axis Powers would confirm Mussolini's own position, show his good judgment in making an alliance with Germany, and secure for him some at least of his demands at the expense of Great Britain and France.

On the other hand, Mussolini had not encouraged Hitler to go to war in September, 1939, and had made it clear that, at all events for the time, he did not feel obliged to fight at the side of his ally. He described this 'stepping down' in high-sounding terms, but the facts were obvious. The Italian people did not want war; their wishes mattered little to Mussolini, since he knew that they would follow his lead, and that without political revolution—for which there were no leaders—they could not do otherwise. Mussolini hesitated because Italy was not ready for war and could not get help from the Germans at sea or reckon on sufficient German supplies by land to withstand an Allied blockade.

Above all, Mussolini could not be sure that Germany would win the war. It is probable that at any time between the outbreak of war and the German successes in Norway, he would have preferred a negotiated peace without military victory for either side. At the price of using his influence to secure such a peace, he might hope to obtain concessions from Great Britain and France. Italy would thus strengthen her position, and, in the uneasy balance which would follow a compromise peace, Italian bargaining power would be an important factor, while Germany would continue to exist as a barrier against communism.

At all events, the British Government had reason to expect that Mussolini would remain 'malevolently' neutral, or non-belligerent, unless the Allies took some action directly contrary to Italian interests

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chapter VIII, section (i), for British policy towards Japan in the first year of the war.

or unless the Germans appeared to be winning the war easily and quickly. Italian bargaining power was a wasting asset, and Mussolini could not wait too long, but in the first months of the war there were no obvious signs of a rapid victory for either side. German military inaction after the defeat of Poland surprised Italian opinion and even suggested doubts whether after all the Germans would win the war. The much-vaunted German air force did little. At sea the Allies held their own against submarine attacks and countered within a few weeks the new danger of the magnetic mine. The victory of the British 8-inch and 6-inch gun cruisers against the 11-inch guns of the 'pocket battleship' *Admiral Graf Spee* was a warning to the Italians of the risks of a battle with the British navy.

There were arguments in favour of compelling Mussolini to choose at once between open war or full collaboration with the Allies. A 'knock-out blow' against one of the Axis Powers would affect the morale of the other, and strengthen the position of the Allies in south-east Europe. In any case, unless Mussolini were compelled to submit to the full exercise of the Allied rights of belligerency at sea, the blockade of Germany would remain imperfect.

Once again, however, the resources of the Allies did not allow them to take the initiative or permit any large-scale diversion from the main objective of building up an overwhelming concentration against Germany. Hence the wiser policy was to avoid forcing Mussolini to make his choice. The Italian acceptance of a British offer to discuss questions of trade seemed to justify a policy of silence on the main issue in spite of the despatch of Italian reinforcements to Libya. Ciano said to Sir P. Loraine, British Ambassador at Rome, on November 13 that the 'present purpose' of the Italian Government was to 'carry on the life of the country' on a basis of 'non-belligerency'. If this decision were not maintained—in other words, if Mussolini planned to enter the war on the German side—Ciano would tell Sir P. Loraine in time to allow an 'exchange of views'. Ciano's promise might be no more than an Italian method of re-insurance, and the 'exchange of views' might well turn out to be merely an attempt at blackmail, but the winter months went by without any shift from 'non-belligerency'.

The loss of initiative which compelled the Allies to deal cautiously with Mussolini also affected their policy in south-east Europe. Here there was a certain divergence between French and British views. This divergence was due to the anxiety of the French to draw the main centre of warfare away from the western front and also to use the armies of the Balkan States as a means of redressing the numerical balance of forces in favour of the Allies. As long, however, as the

Germans did not attack in south-east Europe the two Governments were agreed that their interests would best be served by the creation of a Balkan *bloc* resolved to defend itself against German attack. They were also agreed that any encouragement given to the formation of such a *bloc* must not be such as to supply Italy with a reason or even a pretext for abandoning her neutrality. The difference between British and French policy lay in the respective estimates of what could be done to encourage the Balkan States without provoking Italy.

There were other obstacles in the way of a formation of a Balkan *bloc*. The States of south-east Europe were, like Belgium, afraid of Germany, and concerned primarily with avoiding German attack. Roumania was equally nervous of Russia, and Yugoslavia and Greece nervous of Italy. Hungary and Bulgaria had territorial claims against their neighbours. Great Britain and France, at the outbreak of the war, were on the point of concluding a treaty of mutual assistance with Turkey, but the difficulties in the final stages of negotiation justified the Foreign Office in refusing to be led into wishful thinking about the possibilities of military cooperation in south-east Europe.

Although Turkey would probably not have entered into any new commitment in her foreign relations if Italy had not invaded Albania, Mussolini's speeches in favour of an Italian occupation of Anatolia had not been forgotten, and the Italian position in the Dodecanese was a threat as well as a source of discontent to Turkey. The seizure of Albania was more serious since it affected the *status quo* in the Balkans. Hence, on May 12, 1939, the Turkish Government joined Great Britain in a declaration that the two countries would conclude a long-term agreement, and meanwhile would cooperate on a basis of mutual aid 'in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area.'<sup>1</sup>

At the outbreak of war the political and military terms of an Anglo-Franco-Turkish treaty were largely agreed, though the financial and economic clauses were outstanding. The Turkish demands were high, but the Foreign Office thought that they were not too high a price to pay for the political and military agreement. Hence a tripartite treaty was initialled on September 28, 1939. According to this treaty, (i) Great Britain and France promised help to Turkey in the event of aggression against her by a European Power, (ii) Great Britain and France on the one part, and Turkey on the other part promised mutual assistance in the event of 'an act of aggression by a European Power leading to war in the Mediterranean area' involving the signatories, (iii) Turkey promised aid to

<sup>1</sup> The French Government would have joined in this declaration if difficulties had not arisen with Turkey over the cession of the Hatay (the Sanjak of Alexandretta). On June 23, 1939, after the cession had been satisfactorily arranged, a Franco-Turkish declaration was announced in terms similar to those agreed with Great Britain.

Great Britain and France in the fulfilment of their guarantees to Greece and Roumania, (iv) if Great Britain and France were at war with a European Power in consequence of an aggression by that Power to which provisions (ii) and (iii) did not apply, the signatories would consult together, and Turkey would observe at least a benevolent neutrality towards Great Britain and France. A 'suspense' clause postponed the application of these terms until Turkey had received sufficient war material for the defence of her Thracian frontier; a protocol was added to the treaty to the effect that the obligations undertaken by Turkey were not to have the effect of compelling her to go to war with the U.S.S.R. It was intended to keep this protocol secret, but the Turkish Government announced its existence.

The Russian attitude to the treaty was indeed disquieting. At the end of September the Soviet Government invited M. Sarajoglu, Turkish Foreign Minister, to Moscow, in order to discuss 'matters of common interest', including a Russo-Turkish pact. The Russians asked that the Turkish undertaking to support Great Britain and France in the execution of their guarantees to Roumania should be narrowed down to provide only for consultation, and that the protocol exempting Turkey from taking part in war against the U.S.S.R. should be widened to secure the suspension of the treaty as a whole if the U.S.S.R. were engaged in war with Great Britain and France.

The Foreign Office thought that, in order to avoid putting a strain on Russo-Turkish relations, we should acquiesce in these demands on the condition that we were shown the text of the proposed Russo-Turkish pact, and that this pact did not preclude Turkey from coming into the war on the Allied side. The Russo-Turkish negotiations broke down—mainly over Russian demands (i) that the treaty should not involve the U.S.S.R. in taking part in a war against Germany, and (ii) that Turkey should deny passage through the Straits to warships and transports other than those of Black Sea Powers. After the breakdown the Turkish Government signed the Anglo-Franco-Turkish treaty in the form in which it had been initialled, but the Foreign Office suspected that the Russians would not have given up a pact with Turkey unless they had made some arrangement with Germany for Russo-German action in the Balkans. Hence it was even more desirable and more difficult to secure a Balkan *bloc*.

At the second meeting of the Supreme War Council on September 22 the French representatives put forward proposals for establishing an Allied force at Salonika or Istanbul. The British representatives argued that apart from the very heavy strain on Allied resources the presence of an Allied force in one of the Balkan States was incompatible with the plan of a neutral Balkan *bloc*. The War Cabinet

continued to be a little nervous about these French suggestions; they decided before the fourth meeting of the Supreme War Council on December 19 that the British representatives should hold to the agreed Anglo-French policy. At the meeting the French once more proposed measures for helping the Balkan countries if they should wish to resist aggression. They suggested a diplomatic approach, with a promise of material help, to Turkey, Roumania, Greece and Yugoslavia.

Mr. Chamberlain tried to make the discussion more precise. He pointed out that each of the Balkan countries was differently situated, and unlikely to agree to enter a *bloc* merely on a promise of mutual support. We could do little, for example, to help Yugoslavia. The French had in mind the ninety divisions which the Balkan countries could put into the field, but the military value of these divisions was unequal, and there seemed little prospect of a united Balkan force. In any case, before we could give an undertaking to the Balkan countries we should have to secure at least the benevolent neutrality of Italy. The Foreign Office were doubtful about an approach to the Italian Government. Although Mussolini hesitated to take the risk of war, he was as closely bound as ever to Germany, and was continuing to protest against British contraband control. He was therefore likely to pass on to the Germans any hint given to him about the Allied plans, and would also try to prevent the Allies from putting these plans into effect. We were considering a Scandinavian expedition; since we could not send expeditions to Scandinavia and the Balkans at the same time, we should be wiser to say nothing to Italy.

On December 24 the French Ambassador in Rome discussed the Balkan situation informally with Ciano. Ciano agreed about the desirability of a Balkan *bloc*. Five days later Sir P. Loraine also mentioned the matter to him. He told Ciano that he had been given a hint from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Allies were suspected of 'preparing something' in the Balkans. Ciano answered Sir P. Loraine on January 9, 1940, that Mussolini was not yet willing to discuss the Balkans. Sir P. Loraine thought that Mussolini wished to keep his freedom of manoeuvre and that, although—as earlier—he wanted a German, not an Allied victory, he would like best of all a negotiated peace with the balance tipped on the German side.

## CHAPTER II

The development and collapse of the Allied plans with regard to Scandinavia: the political consequences of the allied defeat in Norway: Anglo-American relations before the opening of the German offensive in the West

### (i)

*Proposal to cut off the supply of iron ore to Germany through Narvik: French proposal for an expedition to aid Finland and to occupy the Swedish ore fields.*

THE fact that in December, 1939, the British Government were considering an expedition to Scandinavia illustrates the efforts made by the Allies to find some way of gaining the initiative. From the French point of view a diversion in Scandinavia, like the proposed action in the Balkans, had the advantage of attacking the Germans in an area distant from France. For the British a Scandinavian expedition offered a chance of using the greater mobility given to them by sea-power. Unfortunately the project suffered from many of the defects which had caused disaster to British overseas expeditions in the early stages of previous wars. The circumstances in which it had been first put forward quickly changed. It took too little account of enemy counter-moves. It was neither pushed rapidly to execution nor abandoned when the opportunity had passed. From first to last it was an affair of improvisation with insufficient study behind it.<sup>1</sup>

The occasion, or rather opportunity, out of which the Scandinavian project arose was, broadly speaking, the Russian attack on Finland. This attack opened on November 30, 1939, two days after the Russians had denounced their treaty of non-aggression with Finland and nearly two months after they had summoned a Finnish representative to Moscow to discuss 'certain political questions.' While the discussions were taking place the British Government continued their cautious policy towards the U.S.S.R. They did not wish to drive the Russians into closer collaboration with Germany. They could not prevent a Russian advance in the Baltic; such an advance indeed would matter little to the Allied prosecution of the war and might cause trouble between Russia and Germany. The Foreign

<sup>1</sup> The absence of any adequate 'security' arrangements about the plans is also a factor which probably influenced the course of events.



Office assumed that, in spite of their denunciation of the 'imperialist' motives of the Allies in continuing the war, the Soviet Government did not want a strong and victorious Germany, and that their aims were to secure their own survival and to hold the balance in order to 'bolshevisé' an exhausted Europe.

The Foreign Office realised that the only way of regaining some kind of political contact with the Russians lay through trade negotiations. Lord Halifax therefore asked M. Maisky on September 23, 1939, whether the Soviet Government would be willing to discuss a war trade agreement. M. Maisky replied four days later that the Soviet Government would enter such discussions if we really desired them. Later M. Maisky hinted at the possibility of a barter arrangement; on October 16 he answered an enquiry about the risk that the Russians might pass on to the Germans material received under this agreement. He said that, if the Soviet Government made a trade agreement, they would do so in their own interest. He also argued that Russian action in the Baltic was defensive and necessary because 'it was an uncertain world, and no friendship was secure in these days.'

On October 24 the War Cabinet agreed that, unless the Russians were making more and far-reaching economic concessions to Germany, we should offer a trade agreement as a means towards the improvement of Anglo-Russian political relations, but that we should tell M. Maisky that the plan would be put into effect only if political conditions allowed, and that the negotiations would lapse in the event of a Russian attack on Finland. Lord Halifax spoke to M. Maisky on October 25, but for over a month there was no Russian answer. On November 27 Lord Halifax asked M. Maisky to the Foreign Office for a general discussion. M. Maisky defended the Russian demands on Finland, and complained that British diplomacy was everywhere working against Russian interests. Lord Halifax said that this was untrue, and that, in spite of all that had happened since the signature of the Russo-German pact, we were continuing to try for better relations; we had, in fact, made proposals for a trade agreement, and had had no reply.

The Russian attack on Finland destroyed any immediate chance of improving Anglo-Russian political relations. The Finnish Government appealed on December 3 to the League of Nations. The Foreign Office thought that the appeal would not bring any effective help and that it would merely advertise 'the failure, at the moment, of the ideas of consultation and co-operation in the face of a number of gangster Great Powers . . . Each meeting of this kind brings the League into greater disrepute, and will make it harder to set up anything in its place after the war.' The Foreign Office hoped that every country would do what it could to help Finland, but that there

would be no proposal to impose sanctions or to expel the U.S.S.R. from the League. The imposition of sanctions would be ineffective, and expulsion, as matters stood, slightly ridiculous. Nevertheless, if expulsion were proposed, we should have to vote for it. When, on the initiative of a number of Latin American States, a motion was brought forward to the effect that the U.S.S.R. had placed itself outside the Covenant, and was no longer a member of the League, the British representative voted with the majority.

The British Government had already begun to send the Finns such material as they could spare, but at this stage they considered direct military support impracticable, especially in view of the obvious unwillingness of Sweden and Norway to go to war on behalf of Finland. The Foreign Office agreed that unless the Russian attack on Finland were followed by aggression against the Scandinavian States there were no valid grounds for changing our policy of avoiding war with the U.S.S.R. Thus at first the War Cabinet did not even discuss any possible strategic connexion between the control of the Swedish iron ore fields<sup>1</sup> and intervention on behalf of the Finns. All that they had in mind before mid-December was the use of sea power to interfere with the ore traffic to Germany from Narvik. The British Government had already stated on September 16 that they would regard a German attack on Norway as equivalent to an attack on Great Britain. This declaration, to which the Norwegians did not reply, had been made at the suggestion of the Foreign Office in order to secure Norwegian co-operation in blockade measures. It had not envisaged interference in Norwegian territorial waters without the consent of the Norwegian Government. The first proposal for direct action against the Narvik traffic by laying a minefield in Norwegian territorial waters<sup>2</sup> was made by Mr. Churchill on September 19, 1939. This proposal was not fully discussed until the middle of November. Mr. Churchill then submitted a plan for a 'northern barrage'—a minefield from the Orkneys to the Norwegian coast.<sup>3</sup> The preparation of the barrage would take about six months. Mr. Churchill therefore suggested to Lord Halifax that we might lay mines at once to prevent the passage of ore ships from Narvik after the freezing of the Gulf of Bothnia. The Foreign Office doubted the

<sup>1</sup> The iron ore fields of Kiruna and Gällivare in northern Sweden were one of the main German sources of supply. The ore was taken by rail either to the Norwegian port of Narvik or to Lulea and the smaller Swedish ports on the Gulf of Bothnia. Narvik was ice-free throughout the year. Lulea was closed during the winter months. An Allied expedition which landed at Narvik and followed the railway to the Gulf of Bothnia and thence into Finland would, literally, take the ore fields in its stride.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. in order to drive shipping outside these waters.

<sup>3</sup> This plan had been adopted in the latter part of the First World War. The Norwegian Government had agreed at the end of September, 1918, to lay the mines in their waters, but they explained that they were doing so in their own interests, and that they did not recognise any right of the belligerents to require them to take such action.

expediency as well as the legality of this plan. We could not describe a minefield as a measure to prevent the operation of German submarines in Norwegian territorial waters; we might involve ourselves in serious difficulties if the Norwegians began to clear the mines and we took steps to prevent them. In any case a minefield could be laid only at one point, and a continuous watch would be difficult.

On December 11 Mr. Churchill raised the general question of the strategic results of an extension of the war in the event of a Russian attack on Norway and Sweden. The War Cabinet asked the Foreign Office to draw up a memorandum on the political aspects of the question. The Foreign Office took the view that the Scandinavian States would continue to try to avoid war with Russia, though they would do everything short of war to help Finland. Norway indeed could give little help to the Finns. Russia was unlikely, after the defeat of Finland, to make demands on the Scandinavian States of a kind which would bring about an appeal from Sweden for German intervention. Allied assistance to Norway and Sweden would raise very serious military problems. The Swedish Foreign Office had already told Sir E. Monson, British Minister at Stockholm, that they hoped we should remain at peace with the U.S.S.R. since a declaration of war against Russia would force Germany to support her, and bring Sweden into the field of operations. The Swedes did not think that the Allies could help them.

Mr. Churchill, however, believed that, with our command of the sea, we could meet a German invasion of Scandinavia. He proposed, in a memorandum of December 16, that we should stop the ore traffic to Germany both from Narvik and from the Gulf of Bothnia.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill's political argument was that we could not continue to respect all the rights of neutrals if Germany disregarded them. At this stage Mr. Churchill did not suggest the seizure of the ore fields. This proposal was put forward by the French, in an indirect form, on December 19 at the fourth meeting of the Supreme War Council in Paris. The French thought it possible that the Germans might seize the ore fields either in agreement with the Russians (who would take the Finnish nickel mines at Petsamo) or in order to prevent the Russians from getting possession of them.<sup>2</sup> M. Daladier quoted a report of the German industrialist Thyssen to Hitler and Göring that victory or defeat for Germany depended on the control of the Swedish ore fields. M. Daladier thought that, if Germany seized the ore fields, she might prolong the war by one or even two years. The Allies should therefore inform the Scandinavian Governments

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill considered that a minefield could be laid by submarines in the Gulf of Bothnia.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. if the Russians entered Sweden to prevent help reaching the Finns across Swedish territory.

that they were hoping for Scandinavian co-operation in aid to Finland; that they regarded the preservation and integrity of Norway and Sweden as an important element in European security and that they were ready to consider what help they could provide against any possible consequences of Swedish or Norwegian help to Finland.

The Foreign Office view of the French proposal was that it invited Sweden and Norway to go to war with the U.S.S.R. and pledged Allied support to them if they did so. This policy might save Finland. It would also solve the iron ore problem by allowing us to establish ourselves at Narvik and Lulea, but it would be contrary to the recommendations of the Chiefs of Staff that we should avoid war with Russia. The Foreign Office agreed with Mr. Churchill that we could not go on observing all the rules of international law while Germany broke them. On the other hand the stoppage of the Narvik traffic was not of great importance unless we could also stop the traffic from the Baltic ports.

When the War Cabinet discussed the various proposals on December 22, Mr. Churchill wanted to accept the French plan, and also to take action at once against the ore traffic. He thought that we could meet German attempts to seize the ore fields, and that there would be advantages in conducting operations in Scandinavia, where we could use our sea power, rather than on the western front. Lord Halifax, however, pointed out that, if we had in mind to accept the larger French proposal, we should have to land a force at Narvik and sent it into Sweden by rail. We could hardly make the landing without Norwegian consent. Hence we should avoid prejudicing this larger plan by taking immediate action against the Narvik traffic which might antagonise the Scandinavian Governments. We ought to give all possible assistance to Finland, approach Norway and Sweden on the lines suggested by the French, and await the results of our approach.

The War Cabinet took a middle line between these views. They decided to send the proposed communication to the Scandinavian Governments, and also to tell them that we intended to stop the supply of iron ore to Germany from Sweden. This decision did not commit the War Cabinet to anything more, in form, than an offer of assistance, on certain conditions, to Norway and Sweden. Nonetheless, from this time, the smaller plan of action against the Narvik traffic became entangled with the larger plan to forestall any possible German occupation of the ore fields by occupying them ourselves as an indirect consequence of assisting the Finns. The Narvik plan might or might not have been a wise move; at all events it was primarily an exercise of sea power, limited in scope, and requiring no great diversion of forces. It did not directly concern Sweden or require the active co-operation of Norway. The plan

could be abandoned if political or military reasons made its execution undesirable. It was of itself unlikely to bring about a German invasion of Norway.

The larger plan was a far more difficult undertaking from which it would be impossible to withdraw without an admission of major defeat. The *démarche* to the Scandinavian Governments was not an actual military commitment, but it implied a promise of military aid and indeed, especially on the French side, the reason for the approach was to secure the consent of Norway and Sweden to measures which would certainly involve these countries in the war against Germany. It is remarkable that the Allies did not take into account the effect upon the Scandinavian peoples of the fate of Poland. The attitude of the Belgian King and his Government had shewn that the small nations would try to keep out of the war as long as possible and that they were afraid even of precautionary measures in their own defence. The Allies could bring large-scale assistance to Belgium within a few hours; they could not reach Scandinavia as quickly or in such force. Furthermore at this time a German march through Belgium seemed much more likely than an attack on Norway or Sweden if the Scandinavian Powers behaved discreetly towards Hitler. Hence it was most improbable that the Allied *démarche* would meet with anything more than an emphatic and anxious refusal. Even before the approach was made, the Foreign Office had further evidence of Swedish nervousness. Sir E. Monson reported that the Swedish Government had asked for less publicity about British assistance to the Finns. M. Boheman, Secretary-General of the Swedish Foreign Office, said to a member of the British Legation that more definite action by Sweden in support of Finland would be 'suicide', and that Sweden did not want Allied assurances. The King of Sweden in conversation with Sir E. Monson 'spoke wistfully of the possibility of peace with Germany', and suggested that a conference might be proposed; in such an event Sweden might get help against Russia. The King agreed that Hitler was not to be trusted, but said that Göring was very different.

(ii)

*Refusal of the Scandinavian Governments to allow the passage of an Allied expedition: the end of Finnish resistance.*

In view of their information about the attitude of Sweden the Foreign Office recommended that we should say nothing to the two Scandinavian Governments about our intention to stop the ore traffic.

Hence on December 27 the communication—in the form of an *aide-mémoire*—to the Norwegian and Swedish Ministers in London did not mention the proposals to stop the Narvik traffic, but was limited to a statement that the Allies proposed to give Finland ‘unofficially . . . all the indirect assistance in their power.’ They hoped that the Scandinavian Governments would be ‘similarly disposed to help Finland and ready to afford all necessary facilities for help from other sources.’ They wished to assure the two Governments that they were prepared to consider how they could assist them ‘against the possible consequences’ of their (Swedish or Norwegian) ‘direct or indirect assistance . . . to Finland.’

The Swedish Government replied on January 4, 1940, that the maintenance of their neutrality would best further Finnish as well as common European interests. Lord Halifax pointed out to the Swedish Minister in London that the reply did not make an explicit reference to the Allied offer. The Minister said that neither Russia nor Germany had put direct pressure on Sweden and that it seemed too early to discuss an eventuality which had not yet arisen.<sup>1</sup> The Norwegian reply was not received until January 15, 1940. The Norwegian Government were grateful for the Anglo-French assurance regarding the preservation of the integrity and independence of Norway, but did not at present wish to have this assurance ‘more precisely defined.’

Meanwhile the War Cabinet considered the matter again on January 2 and 3. The Chiefs of Staff, whose advice had been asked, recommended the larger plan if its success were thought to be decisive for the war. They did not recommend the minor operation against the Narvik traffic if we intended the larger plan, since we might antagonise Norway, and possibly Sweden, and give the Germans a pretext for demands on either or both of those countries. Since we could not send effective aid until March, the Scandinavian countries might accept the German demands. Mr. Churchill, however, had not changed his views about immediate action against the Narvik traffic. He suggested that the Chiefs of Staff should be asked to reconsider the possible effect on us of a German occupation of bases in southern Norway. The Prime Minister concluded from the report of the Chiefs of Staff that the military consequences would be less unfavourable if the Germans did not get beyond Christiansand and Oslo, and that we could keep them out of the western ports of Norway. Upon this assumption the War Cabinet agreed (i) to tell

<sup>1</sup> The Minister added that some Swedish newspapers were suggesting that the Allies thought that it would be an advantage to them to create a new Scandinavian front. Sir C. Dormer, British Minister at Oslo, had reported on January 2 that German propaganda was asserting that the Allies were using the desire to help Finland as a means of bringing Norway and Sweden into the war. They could then cut off German ore supplies and establish submarine bases on the Norwegian coast. Germany, however, would not be caught unprepared.



the Norwegians that we were proposing to stop the Narvik traffic, and (ii) to await their reply before taking a final decision.

On January 6 Lord Halifax, with the approval of the French, gave an *aide-mémoire* to the Norwegian Minister stating that the German torpedoing—without warning—of two British ships and one Greek ship in Norwegian territorial waters had deprived these waters of their neutral character. We therefore felt obliged to extend our own naval operations to prevent the use of Norwegian territorial waters by German ships and trade. Lord Halifax gave an *aide-mémoire* in similar terms to the Swedish Minister 'as a matter of courtesy', since Swedish goods were shipped to Germany from Norwegian ports.

The Norwegian Government replied on January 8.<sup>1</sup> They contested the facts about the sinking of ships and said that in any case infractions of their neutrality by one belligerent did not authorise another belligerent to take similar action. They also could not believe that Great Britain would 'drive a small neutral country into a war,' though this would be the result if the action mentioned in the *aide-mémoire* were taken. The Swedish Government also protested strongly against our proposal. M. Boheman told the British Chargé d'affaires that the result would be a German occupation of Denmark, and possibly the end of the independent existence of all the Scandinavian States.' He added: 'I should have thought that the British Government had the fate of a sufficient number of smaller States on their consciences as it is.'

The War Cabinet discussed the situation on January 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. The Foreign Office continued to recommend that, if we intended to carry out our larger plan, we should give up the smaller plan of interference with the Narvik traffic, since our action might involve the Scandinavian countries in war with Germany, and thus cause the greatest resentment against us. The War Cabinet decided once again to postpone a decision, and meanwhile to put to the Norwegian and Swedish Governments alternative plans by which they would themselves cut off German ore supplies. Mr. Churchill, however, remained in favour of immediate action. He doubted whether the Germans would retaliate by an invasion of southern Norway. We could not go on allowing neutrals to tie our hands while we were fighting for their liberties.<sup>2</sup>

On January 17 the War Cabinet had still not come to a final conclusion. They agreed with a suggestion from Lord Halifax that he should see the Scandinavian Ministers again and explain our case firmly to them. The interviews took place on January 18. Lord

<sup>1</sup> The King of Norway also wrote a personal letter to H.M. the King.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill warned the War Cabinet on January 12 that we might be mistaken in thinking that time was on our side. The central position of Germany allowed her to deliver thrusts in several directions, and we might well have a much graver situation ahead of us.



Halifax argued that we had a right to demand that the Germans should not be permitted to break all the rules and commit acts of inhumanity everywhere on the high seas while we were expected to refrain even from the smallest technical violations of international law. It was time that the neutral governments applied their minds to considering the best means of helping rather than hindering a cause which they could not wish to see defeated.

The Scandinavian Governments would not be moved. On January 19 the Norwegian Minister left another memorandum at the Foreign Office protesting against our proposed action, and concluding with the words 'The circumstances that Great Britain is fighting for its life cannot give it a right to jeopardise the existence of Norway.'<sup>1</sup> On January 26, when Mr. Mallet, who had succeeded Sir E. Monson as Minister to Sweden, presented his credentials, the King of Sweden repeated the view that Sweden could not go to war openly in support of Finland, and that our proposed action against the Narvik traffic would lead to immediate German reprisals against Sweden.

On January 29 the War Cabinet considered another report from the Chiefs of Staff. The latter were now in favour of the 'larger operation' since it would give us our 'first and best chance of wresting the initiative' from the Germans and of 'shortening the war.' Their report stated the naval, military, and air forces required for the occupation of Narvik, Trondhjem, Bergen and Stavanger, an advance to Lulea before the breaking of the ice, and the provision of aid to the Swedes in southern Sweden. The War Cabinet postponed a decision until after military discussions with the French. The French had suggested a landing at Petsamo which would certainly mean war with Russia, and which seemed to the Chiefs of Staff in other respects impracticable.<sup>2</sup> Although these discussions did not take matters much further, the War Cabinet decided on February 2 to reject the Petsamo proposal and to go on with the 'larger plan' which combined aid to Finland with the occupation of the ore fields.

The Prime Minister, Lord Halifax, and Mr. Churchill went to

<sup>1</sup> On the same day M. Koht, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, said in the Storting that 'when a ship is blown up and the crew are killed, we have no proof left of who is responsible, and we cannot address our complaints to any one government; we can only blame the war itself.' The Foreign Office instructed Sir C. Dormer on January 24 to point out the bad impression made in Great Britain by this speech, and to say that 'is the Norwegian Government's conception of neutrality is that both belligerents earn equal blame for action known to be taken by one of them, the other will have less inducement to respect Norwegian interests.'

<sup>2</sup> On January 18 the French Ambassador gave the Foreign Office a memorandum from the French Government urging the importance of immediate action at Narvik (with the possibility that this action might lead to the control of the ore-fields) and of using Polish ships serving with the British navy to operate against the Russians in the Arctic. The British Government had already refused this latter proposal. The memorandum pointed out that the defeat of Finland would have serious consequences for the Allies since they had publicly assured the Finns of support.

Paris on February 5 for a meeting of the Supreme War Council. Mr. Chamberlain explained our plan. He said that the expedition would require Scandinavian consent; the force must be substantial, and must consist of regular divisions. They would, however, go as 'volunteers,' and Russia need not declare war against the Allies unless she wished to do so. The German reaction would be one of 'consternation'. We should have to leave a force near to the ore deposits; the Germans would find it hard to turn out this force, though they might occupy points in southern Norway, and we might have to assist the Swedes.

So far the Prime Minister was repeating the advice given by the Chiefs of Staff. He now turned to the diplomatic side. He thought that the Finns, if they were told of our plan, would appeal to Sweden and Norway to allow passage across their territory; that the Scandinavian countries would not refuse this sole means of saving Finland, and that we could meet the argument of danger from Germany by offering help against a German attack. If Norway and Sweden become involved in war with Germany, the Allies would gain by the diversion of German forces and the stoppage of supplies vital to German industry. M. Daladier agreed with these proposals. He asked what we should do if the Scandinavian countries refused passage. Mr. Chamberlain said that we must take this risk, but that refusal was unlikely, though we might get formal protests.

The military assumptions behind this policy were remarkable. The belief that the Scandinavian Governments could be persuaded to enter the war on behalf of Finland was hardly less astonishing in view of the assertions which they had already made, and which, in fact, they continued to repeat. Two days after the meeting of the Supreme War Council the Swedish Foreign Minister told Mr. Mallet that Great Britain would be unable to help Sweden in the event of a sudden attack by Germany. The Germans could destroy every city in Sweden by bombing, while it would take the Allies five months to bring 100,000 men into the country. On February 10 the Swedish Minister in London, on his return from Stockholm, repeated that the Swedes were determined to maintain their neutrality. They did not feel responsible for the conditions which had led to the war in Europe. They also could not discuss with the Allies the possibility of military assistance in a situation arising out of aid given by the Scandinavian countries to Finland. The Minister admitted that Swedish policy might not seem to the Allies 'very heroic, nor perhaps wholly in accordance with purely Allied interests.' The Norwegian Government were equally clear. They had sent another note on February 2 declaring that Norwegian neutrality was 'the unanimous

will of the Norwegian people.' On February 19 the King of Sweden issued a public statement—after a press report that the Swedish Government had refused a Finnish request for military aid—that he regarded it as his 'imperative duty to make the utmost endeavour' to keep Sweden out of the war between the Great Powers, and that he had warned the Finnish Government 'from the very first' not to count on Swedish military intervention.

Meanwhile the first requirement of the Allied plans—an appeal from Finland—seemed less likely to be fulfilled. The Finns were coming to the end of their resources in men and material and the Allied offers appeared insufficient. Even if the Allies could send larger numbers more quickly, there seemed no chance that the Swedish Government would allow their passage. An appeal to the Allies might thus make matters worse for the Finns in the negotiations which they would soon have to open with Russia.<sup>1</sup>

The collapse of the Allied plan came quickly. On March 1 the Finnish Minister in London told Lord Halifax that the military situation was very difficult, and that in view of the attitude of Sweden, there was little chance of getting Allied help to Finland. In any case Allied assistance could not arrive in time, and appeared to be limited to 12,000 men. Later on the same day the Minister said that he had been instructed to ask (i) whether the Allies could send, at once, 100 bombers with their crews, and 50,000 men, with reinforcements later, in time to reach Finland during March, (ii) whether the Allied forces could fight anywhere in the country, (iii) whether we could persuade Norway and Sweden to allow passage to the Allied Forces, and what we should do in the event of their refusal.<sup>2</sup>

The French Government were asked the same questions. M. Daladier replied that they would accept all the Finnish requests and

<sup>1</sup> Another incident at this time shewed the anxiety of the Norwegian Government to avoid giving provocation to Germany. A German ship, the *Altmark*, was intercepted by H.M.S. *Cossack* in Norwegian waters, while returning to Germany with about 300 British prisoners from merchant ships sunk by the *Graf Spee*. The commander of the *Cossack* proposed that the *Altmark* should go to Bergen under Anglo-Norwegian guard in order that the circumstances of her passage might be investigated. After this proposal had been refused, a party from H.M.S. *Cossack* boarded the *Altmark* and released the prisoners. This action brought the strongest protest from the Norwegian Government, although the latter had failed to compel the *Altmark* to observe the conditions under which belligerent warships could enter and pass through neutral waters.

It is significant of the odd currents of opinion at this time that Lord Lothian warned the Foreign Office that, although our explanation of the *Altmark* incident had been well received in the United States, further action such as the laying of a minefield in Norwegian waters might meet with a less good reception, and strengthen the growing demand for maintaining neutral rights against high-handed British interference. On February 29 the War Cabinet again postponed a decision about the minefield.

<sup>2</sup> The Finnish Government informed the British Minister on February 28 that, in answer to their enquiry, the Swedish Government had said that they would allow passage only to small groups of unarmed volunteers, and not to a force of Allied troops.

were prepared to override Norwegian and Swedish objections. The War Cabinet were disquieted at the French answer. The promises seemed to be bluff, and made in the knowledge that the French could blame us for their failure to redeem them. We could neither spare 100 bombers, nor transport 50,000 men to Finland in March. If our forces fought in the south of Finland, they could be cut off by the Germans after the melting of the ice in the Gulf of Bothnia; we should therefore need more than 20,000 men on our lines of communication. The War Cabinet decided to tell the Finns that transport facilities in Scandinavia were the limiting factor in our offer, but that the despatch of Allied forces would mean that the British Empire and France were wholeheartedly behind the Finns, and would do everything in their power to support them, and that we had approached Norway and Sweden with a request for passage.

The formal approach to the two latter Governments was made forthwith. Both Governments sent a refusal. The Swedish Foreign Minister implied 'very politely' in his conversation with Mr. Mallet that we were more interested in using Scandinavia as a battleground for 'our war' with Germany than in saving Finland. Mr. Mallet replied that 'our war' was of vital interest to Sweden. The Foreign Minister's answer was that he did not think it in Swedish interests that the Germans should be utterly defeated, since the result would be a communist Germany too weak to act in eastern Europe as a counterpoise to Russia. The danger to Sweden from Russia would then be worse than the danger from Germany in the event of a German victory.

The French still wished to tell the Scandinavian Governments that we intended to carry out our plans whatever their attitude might be. They thought that the two Governments could not commit themselves openly but that they would allow our passage if their responsibility were not openly involved. The Foreign Office was less hopeful. We could make another approach to the Scandinavian Governments, if the Finns asked us to do so, but we could not act even against Norwegian and Swedish passive resistance, since we depended upon the use of their railways.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office thought that, unless we could meet the demand of the Finns for bombers—a demand repeated on March 6—we should not ask them to appeal to us. In any case, since we had no hope of getting Scandinavian consent to our passage, did we really want an appeal? On March 11 the Finnish Government asked the Allied Governments to make

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mallet reported to the Foreign Office on March 12 that a War Office transportation expert who had visited Stockholm had given the impression that he foresaw difficulties in maintaining a force in Finland. The railways from Norway to Sweden could be sabotaged, and resolute enemy air action could reduce the traffic on the 'bottle-neck' east of Boden to a mere trickle. There is no evidence in the Foreign Office papers to shew why these conclusions had not been reached earlier.

another attempt to obtain Scandinavian consent to the passage of an expeditionary force. The result was again negative. Two days later the Finnish Government informed the British Minister that they had signed the terms of an armistice with Russia. They explained that they had not the resources to hold out during the four or five weeks while Allied help was on its way, and that in any case the attitude of Norway and Sweden would have prevented the Allied forces from reaching Finland.

## (iii)

*French insistence upon carrying out the Narvik project: British unwillingness to accept a French proposal for bombing the Caucasian oil-fields: Anglo-Russian relations at the close of the Russo-Finnish war: the Allied notes of April 5, 1940, to Norway and Sweden: the German invasion of Norway and Denmark.*

The suggestion that an Allied force sent through Scandinavia to Finland might cut off German iron ore supplies from Sweden had been made in the first instance by the French. The collapse of Finland was likely to have a specially depressing effect upon French morale. There was in fact no reason why the Allies should have been expected to save Finland from Russian aggression. They were fighting with as yet insufficient resources against Germany. They had the most obvious reasons for not driving Russia into a military alliance with the Germans. Neither the United States nor the Latin American countries (which had taken the initiative in expelling Russia from the League) were willing to undertake the slightest risk on behalf of the Finns. The Scandinavian States, in spite of their direct interest in the survival of Finnish independence, had refused to allow an Allied force passage through their countries. If the Allies had not said that they were trying to save Finland, and if their failure to bring any effective help had not followed closely upon their inability to save Poland, the effect upon public opinion need not have been so serious. Furthermore, the Allies had made it clear to the world that they intended to seize the military initiative and to shorten the war by cutting off from Germany an essential supply. They had now failed to do so.

The Foreign Office realised that the general effect in France might be a strengthening of the movement in favour of a compromise peace. The French attitude might seem unreasonable, but French public opinion had been more uneasy than public opinion in Great Britain over the inaction on land during the first six months of the

war. We had been building up an army; the French already had a large army in the field, and yet had no results to show except continuing economic dislocation. The Foreign Office also understood the tendency of the French Government to suggest operations in areas away from the western front. They expected proposals for a change in our Balkan policy; here also it was impossible to take the initiative in the existing state of Allied resources.

The British Government now proposed to disperse the force assembled for the Scandinavian expedition, since an attempt to seize the ore fields would be likely to drive Norway and Sweden to the German side. The French, however, wanted to carry out the mine-laying in Norwegian waters and to use the probable German reaction for putting the 'larger project' into effect. The Foreign Office regarded this plan as impracticable, but thought that we might warn the Scandinavian States that further subservience to Germany or Russia, instead of enabling them to keep out of the war, might bring them into direct conflict with the Allies.

On March 20 M. Daladier's Government fell. M. Reynaud formed a new administration in which he took over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and M. Daladier became Minister of War and Defence. The British Government had already suggested a meeting of the Supreme War Council. Before this meeting took place M. Reynaud sent a memorandum to the British Embassy in Paris on the future conduct of the war. He proposed once again immediate action in Norwegian territorial waters and expected that German retaliation would give the Allies an opportunity to take control of the ore fields. He also suggested that we should cut off Russian oil supplies to Germany by bombing the Caucasian oil centres.

The War Cabinet had already considered this last possibility. Anglo-Russian relations had been severely strained by the Finnish war. Sir W. Seeds had left Moscow at the end of 1939 and a successor had not been appointed. M. Maisky remained in London, but no general discussion with him took place between November 27, 1939, and the end of January, 1940. On January 30, when he came to the Foreign Office to see Mr. R. A. Butler<sup>1</sup> on the matter of a Russian ship detained in Far Eastern waters, M. Maisky suggested that we and the Russians should 'isolate sources of difference.' He said that at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War he had agreed with Mr. Eden 'to put the war in a compartment by itself, but otherwise to try to maintain the necessary contacts between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.' He hoped that we might treat the Finnish war in the same way. He explained that there was 'nothing sentimental' about the Russo-German *rapprochement*. The Soviet Government intended to follow only their own interests. 'We lived in a period of change,

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.



anything might happen, and in the jungle the strangest of animals got together if they felt that their joint interests made this advisable.'

The Russo-German economic agreement of February 11 seemed an unsatisfactory sequel to M. Maisky's assurances; the War Cabinet were bound to consider how much further the Russians intended to take their assistance to Germany, and whether we should gain or lose by cutting off Russian oil supplies at the price of war with the U.S.S.R. Neither the Foreign Office nor the Chiefs of Staff regarded action of this kind as desirable. The Foreign Office thought, as before, that Russia did not want to get involved in the war and did not intend to attack us. The Chiefs of Staff thought that bombing the Caucasian oil fields might cause a Russian economic and military collapse, but would not bring about an early defeat of Germany. Meanwhile our military strength in 1940 might not be sufficient to deal with Germany alone. We had also to consider Italy and could not provide until late in 1940 forces adequate to meet Russian threats to the Middle East.

In February Sir S. Cripps, while on a tour in the Far East, had seen the Soviet Ambassador at Chungking, and had come to the conclusion that the Soviet Government wanted a *rapprochement* with Great Britain. At his own suggestion Sir S. Cripps flew to Moscow where on February 16 he saw M. Molotov. He came back saying that M. Molotov had told him that the Soviet Government wished to make a trade or political agreement with Great Britain, if the latter would act in a friendly way to Russia. The Foreign Office thought Sir S. Cripps too optimistic, and waited for an approach from M. Maisky. On March 18, during another interview at the Foreign Office about Russian shipping, M. Maisky repeated that Russian policy was one of independence. Nine days later M. Maisky told Lord Halifax that the Soviet Government would be prepared to enter into a trade agreement if we would settle 'certain problems' which had arisen in the course of Anglo-Russian trade. Lord Halifax said that an agreement was difficult because the Russians appeared to be working against our efforts to cut off German trade. M. Maisky answered that the Russians would guarantee that goods sent by the Allies to Russia were only for Russian use. He stated once more that Russian policy was independent, and that there was no foundation for the talk of a Russo-German military alliance.

The Foreign Office did not expect much to come from M. Maisky's proposal. On the other hand it would be to our advantage to increase our trade with Russia and to secure an agreement rationing the import of valuable materials into Russia and restricting the deliveries of oil to Germany. The War Cabinet therefore agreed that the Foreign Office should discuss with M. Maisky the possibilities of an agreement.

In these circumstances the British Ministers at the meeting of the



Supreme War Council on March 28 were unwilling to go beyond a 'study' of the Caucasian project.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister mentioned M. Maisky's approach about a trade agreement as a sign that Russia might be wishing to improve her relations with the Allies. We were ready to meet the urgent French wishes for action of some kind by putting into effect the 'smaller' Scandinavian project, i.e. laying a minefield in Norwegian waters, after we had sent to the Norwegian and Swedish Governments the notes of warning suggested by the Foreign Office.

The War Cabinet accepted on March 29 the recommendations of the Supreme War Council on these lines. Once again French insistence had led the British Ministers to a decision which they probably would not otherwise have taken. They thought it unlikely that the Germans would reply to the laying of a minefield by an invasion of Norway, since the Baltic ports would soon be open and the stoppage of the Narvik traffic would not have a serious effect until the winter of 1940-1. If, however, a German invasion took place, we should occupy Narvik, Bergen, and Trondhjem and try by means of a raid to destroy the aerodrome at Stavanger. The landings would not be attempted against serious Norwegian opposition.<sup>2</sup>

The notes were sent to the Scandinavian Governments on April 5. They stated that events had shewn that the Germans did not allow Sweden and Norway 'that liberty of action in foreign affairs to which they were entitled.' The Scandinavian Governments were therefore not, 'in present circumstances, entirely free agents.' The Allies could not accept this situation, and notified the Scandinavian Governments 'frankly of certain vital interests and requirements which the Allied Governments intend to assert and defend.' The Allies 'seeing that they are waging war for aims which are as much in the interests of smaller States as in their own, cannot allow the course of the war to be influenced against them by advantages derived by Germany from Sweden or from Norway.' They therefore reserved their right

<sup>1</sup> This 'study' was not undertaken. Within a short time the German successes in Norway ruled out of practical consideration any project for an attack on the Caucasian oil fields. The proposal was mentioned in general terms at a meeting of British representatives in Turkey, Hungary, the Balkan States and Italy which was held at the Foreign Office on April 8 and 11. The view taken by all present was that it would be better to drop the project for the time and to reconsider it in the autumn when the German oil position would be more critical and the Allies—and Turkey—would be stronger. M. Reynaud raised the matter again at the Supreme War Council on April 22, but there was obviously no possibility of putting the plan into effect even if the British Government had not been opposed to it.

<sup>2</sup> The British Ministers had been more willing to fall in with the French wish to take immediate action against the Narvik traffic because they wanted French approval of a plan suggested by Mr. Churchill, for dropping mines in German inland waters. It is difficult to understand why this latter plan—which could not have produced more than minor interference with German inland traffic—was given such importance. In fact, after M. Reynaud had accepted it at the Supreme War Council, M. Daladier continued to oppose it on the ground that it would provoke German air retaliation on French factories. M. Daladier refused to give way, and the operation was postponed.

to hinder or prevent Germany from obtaining those advantages. The notes, as was expected, were badly received at Stockholm and Oslo.

On April 8 the Admiralty announced the laying of a minefield in Norwegian territorial waters. On the following day the Germans occupied Oslo, Christiansand, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondhjem and Narvik.<sup>1</sup> They also invaded and occupied Denmark.

## (iv)

*Allied failure to expel the Germans from Norway: refusal of Belgium and the Netherlands to co-ordinate plans of resistance with the Allies: Mussolini's increasing hostility to the Allies.*

During the period between the German invasion of Norway and the withdrawal of the Allied forces intended for the recapture of Trondhjem there was little opportunity for diplomatic action. On the morning of April 9 Sir C. Dormer was instructed to assure the Norwegian Government that we should extend our full aid to Norway and would fight the war in full association with her, and that we were taking immediate steps to deal with the German occupation of Bergen and Trondhjem. Mr. Mallet was instructed at the same time to ask what the Swedish Government intended to do about the German invasion of Norway. The Swedish answer—given after a secret session of the Riksdag—was that Sweden did not intend to enter the war on behalf of Norway, and would fight only if attacked. On the morning of April 10 the French Minister at Stockholm gave the Swedish Foreign Minister a note promising help in the event of a German invasion. The Foreign Minister asked Mr. Mallet whether he had similar instructions. Mr. Mallet said that he had no instructions but that he could associate himself with the French Minister's assurances. The Foreign Office asked him on April 11 to confirm this statement.

On the night of April 10–11 the French Government informed Sir R. Campbell, British Ambassador in Paris, that they were sending a mission to Sweden to encourage the Swedish Government not to give way to German demands. Sir R. Campbell said that the Mission should include British representatives. The French representatives therefore came to London on April 11 for a discussion on policy. They proposed to tell the Swedes that in the event of a German attack the Allies could provide assistance within a definite period. The Prime Minister, however, was more cautious. He warned the French representatives that it would be dangerous to underrate the strength of the position which the Germans had already built

<sup>1</sup> The first German ships started on April 3—that is to say, two days before the Allied notes to the Scandinavian Governments and five days before the British announcement of minelaying in Norwegian territorial waters.

up in Norway; they could quickly reinforce Stavanger, Bergen and Trondhjem, and we should not find it easy to dislodge them. We might have at any moment a great offensive in the west. We ought not therefore to disperse our forces. If we urged Sweden to declare war on Germany on the assumption that the Allies would come to her aid, we might be committed to operations on a considerable scale. Hence we should advise the Swedes to maintain their neutrality unless the Germans tried to reach the ore fields. The French representatives accepted this view, and on the night of April 11-12 Mr. Mallet was instructed that the Mission should not try to persuade the Swedes into a policy of provoking Germany to action, but should say to them that, if they decided to go to war with Germany, they could count on Allied assistance.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office throughout these critical days considered that the French were still too much inclined to think in terms of a diversion of the war from the western front and of reaching the ore fields, whereas the essential and immediate requirement was the recapture of Trondhjem. As late as April 22-3—when the Supreme War Council met in Paris—M. Reynaud considered that the Allies should aim at cutting off the ore supplies or destroying the installations at the mines. Mr. Chamberlain again took a more realist view. He pointed out that, although we had destroyed all the German warships at Narvik, the forces on land were in a strong position, and we could not yet attack them. We should need specially trained troops for an advance from Narvik through the snow to the Swedish frontier. The Germans might send an ultimatum to Sweden; we should be unable to reach the mines in sufficient strength before the German arrival. Four days later—when the military situation had become worse, and the British Government had decided to give up the attack on Trondhjem—the French were still opposed to the evacuation of central Norway, and again the Prime Minister had to point out that Italy might soon enter the war, and that we were not strong enough at sea or in the air to fight at the same time in central Scandinavia and in the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On May 6, in reply to a report from Mr. Mallet quoting Swedish criticism on the Allied withdrawal from central Norway, Lord Halifax instructed him that, if he wished to add anything to his own answers to these criticisms, he could say that we knew very well the reasons for Swedish policy since the outbreak of war. This policy had not enabled Sweden to avoid grave danger to herself and did not allow her to criticise us. On May 7 Mr. Mallet telegraphed that the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed a report that the King of Sweden had exchanged letters with Hitler in the latter half of April emphasising the intention of Sweden to maintain her neutrality. According to a statement by General Bodenschatz which was reported to the Foreign Office, the King of Sweden told Hitler that Sweden would resist a British advance into the country.

<sup>2</sup> After the British recapture of Narvik, a proposal from a Scandinavian source was put to the British Government for the neutralisation of northern Norway during the period of the war. All foreign troops would withdraw south of a line in the neighbourhood of Mosjoen. Narvik would be occupied by the Norwegians, or temporarily by the Swedes, and no ore would be shipped from it. For obvious reasons nothing came of this suggestion.

The Allied failure in Norway—as the Foreign Office were well aware—was certain to have an effect upon the Belgians and Dutch who were likely to be the next victims of German aggression. Since the Germans had now shewn—though there need have been no previous doubts about the matter—that they would break their engagements to respect the neutrality of their neighbours, the Belgians and Dutch might have been expected at least to co-ordinate with the Allies plans for resistance while there was yet time. This consideration applied especially to Belgium, where the public determination to resist was strong, and the chances of Allied help greatest. The official policy of avoiding provocation was in fact futile, since the Germans would neither trouble to look for an excuse to make an attack on Belgium nor decide upon one merely because the Belgians were known to be discussing precautionary measures with the Allies. Fear of German ruthlessness, however, outweighed with the Belgian King and Government—and especially the former—all considerations of logic. After their alarm in November, 1939,<sup>1</sup> the Belgians did not approach the Allies until mid-January, 1940, when they again thought the Germans likely to attack them at once or within a very short time.

On the night of January 13–14 M. Spaak told Sir L. Oliphant, British Ambassador at Brussels, that, if the expected attack took place, Belgium would look to Great Britain and France for help. Sir L. Oliphant was instructed to tell the Belgian Government that we should fulfil our obligations, and that it was necessary to hold staff conversations at once. Sir L. Oliphant gave this message to M. Spaak on January 14, but the Belgians no longer thought that an attack was imminent (neither the British nor the French military authorities had considered it likely) and M. Spaak was evasive about holding staff conversations. The matter also became confused because on January 13 the King of the Belgians asked Sir R. Keyes to come to Belgium. The King does not seem to have made himself clear in his conversation with Sir R. Keyes, and the latter had the wrong impression that, on receiving certain assurances about the future, the King would invite the Allies into Belgium at once even if the Germans did not attack. After this somewhat absurd misunderstanding had been cleared up, the Foreign Office thought it desirable to let the King have a plain statement that the value of Allied assistance to Belgium would be seriously lessened if an invitation to enter the country were not given ‘in sufficient time to enable the British and French troops to secure all the strategic advantages of position before any German attack opens.’ Sir L. Oliphant made a communication in these terms to the King on March 22. No answer was received.

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 9–10.

In the middle of March, however, there had been signs that the Belgians were again becoming nervous of German attack, and, for that matter, of the intentions of the Allies. M. Spaak asked Sir L. Oliphant on March 16 what Great Britain and France would do if the Germans attacked the Netherlands but not Belgium. M. Spaak was told that we could not give a full answer until we had consulted the French Government, but that we could say at once that if the Belgians went to the assistance of the Dutch, we should come immediately to the help of Belgium, and that if, contrary to our expectation, the Belgians did not assist the Dutch, we might send air forces across Belgium and troops into Belgian territory both to help the Dutch and to protect ourselves. In either case our action would depend upon Dutch military dispositions of which as yet we knew nothing. The French agreed with this provisional answer, but no progress was made in co-ordinating Allied plans with the Dutch or with the Belgians. Sir N. Bland, British Minister to the Netherlands, was instructed to discuss with the Netherlands Government the question of Allied assistance; the Dutch answered that they must maintain their traditional policy of independence and that they could not engage themselves with Belgium.

At the Supreme War Council on April 9 M. Reynaud wanted an immediate request to be made to the Belgian Government for an invitation into the country. With British agreement, the request was put to M. Spaak during the night of April 9-10, but was refused. On the following day the Belgian Government announced that they intended to keep to a policy of absolute neutrality. The British and French Governments considered a further statement to the Belgian Government; the Foreign Office thought that it might be desirable to make clear to the Belgians that, in the event of a German invasion of the Netherlands, we should certainly have to send forces through Belgian territory, but the French were afraid that if the Germans heard of a statement to this effect they might put pressure upon the Belgians to say that they would resist any violation of their neutrality. We might therefore find ourselves hindered at the moment of action by Belgian opposition.

Thus, after months of intermittent negotiation, the relations between Belgium and the Allies were still unsatisfactory, and the Belgian King and Government, in a desperate hope of avoiding attack, had lost the most favourable chance of protecting themselves.

The German successes in Scandinavia excited Mussolini as much as they alarmed King Leopold. Mussolini had begun earlier to emphasise the 'malevolent' character of his neutrality, or

non-belligerency. On February 19, in view of the Italian attitude over trade negotiations, the War Cabinet decided to stop German sea-borne coal exports to Italy.<sup>1</sup> This decision brought a strong Italian protest, but after the meeting between Hitler and Mussolini at the Brenner Pass on March 18 Ciano told Sir P. Loraine that Italian policy had not changed.<sup>2</sup> There would be no 'surprises' or *coups de théâtre*. For the time at least Ciano's assurances were borne out by the facts, and, at all events before the German successes in Norway, there was nothing to shew that Mussolini had decided to bring Italy into the war. Even in the first days of the German attack on Norway the evidence of Mussolini's intentions was still conflicting.

The Foreign Office considered at this time that Italy was unlikely to attack the Allies directly, or indirectly by an attack on Corfu which would bring into operation the Allied guarantee to Greece. It was less certain that the Italians would not attack Yugoslavia. With this possibility in mind—and with their usual attempt to find military diversions—the French suggested enquiries about the attitude not only of Yugoslavia but of Turkey, Roumania and Greece. The Foreign Office thought that these enquiries would be unwise, since the attitude of the four States would depend on Allied action, and if we tried to compel them to commit themselves in advance, they would suspect us of wanting to get them involved in the war. The French also raised once again the question of an Allied expedition to Salonika. The British Chiefs of Staff pointed out that—apart from other difficulties—our experience of air attack in Norway had shewn that we could not establish or maintain a force at Salonika if we were at war with Italy. Towards the end of April there were reports that Mussolini intended to enter the war on May 1 or May 2. These reports turned out to be wrong.<sup>3</sup> The general view of the Foreign Office, however, was that Mussolini had three objectives: (i) he was trying to bluff us into concessions over contraband control and into an offer to discuss 'Italian claims'; (ii) he was collaborating with Hitler to attract our attention and our forces from the North Sea to the Mediterranean; (iii) he was preparing the unwilling Italian people to come into the war. The Foreign Office thought it unlikely that Mussolini would go to war over contraband control. If it were essential for military reasons to avoid war with Italy, we might have

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of February a trade agreement with Italy had almost been completed. On February 8 Ciano told Sir P. Loraine that Mussolini had refused to continue (during the ensuing six months) the negotiations for the sale of war material to Great Britain.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence received by the Foreign Office suggested that at the Brenner meeting Mussolini had been much impressed by the brilliance of Hitler's plans and had promised to enter the war.

<sup>3</sup> There were, as usual, many conflicting reports. According to one of them Mussolini was reported to have said: 'The Germans are trying to drag me into the war by the hair. Luckily, I am bald'.



to try to buy her off by satisfying some of her 'claims'. Meanwhile we should pay no attention to them. Our policy for the time should be to offer a trade agreement, but otherwise to maintain both our contraband control and our precautionary measures.

The reports of Mussolini's intentions were conflicting down to the opening of the German western offensive. On May 8 Sir P. Loraine, who had been home on leave prolonged by illness, had a long conversation with Ciano. Sir P. Loraine said that during the last months the possibility of an Anglo-Italian war had reappeared. Ciano's answer was that Mussolini stood by his pact with Germany and would fulfil all his obligations to her. He had taken complete and sole control of Italian policy and would come to his decision 'at his own time and in his own way.' For the moment Italian policy was unchanged. Ciano could not say how long it would remain unchanged—'perhaps two months, perhaps four, perhaps six, maybe even two years.' Neither Ciano nor Mussolini thought that the real war had yet begun. Ciano hinted that Mussolini's attitude would depend on what happened when the 'real war' began. Meanwhile Mussolini would discuss trade matters, but would 'reject and resent' an attempt to bribe him away from his obligations to Germany.

(v)

*British relations with the United States from the outbreak of war to the opening of the German offensive in the west: Mr. Welles' visit to Europe.*

At the outbreak of the war the British Government knew that the great majority of Americans hoped for the defeat of Hitler. Their sympathy with the Allies, however, was based more on American ideas of right and justice than on a calculation of interest. Indeed one of the problems in dealing with Anglo-American relations in the first stages of the war was that public opinion in the United States did not realise the extent to which American strategic and economic interests were bound up with an Allied victory.

To British observers the consequences to the United States of an Allied defeat seemed obvious. The smaller European countries would fall directly under German or Italian domination. Two of these smaller countries had large colonial possessions which—together with the colonies of Great Britain and France—would be at the disposal of Germany and Italy. No help could be expected from Russia; if the Russians had made an agreement with Hitler when they could



have had British and French support in resisting him, they were unlikely to risk opposing him after he had become master of the rest of Europe. Any concessions offered to Japan, in order to obtain freedom of action for the United States armed forces in the Atlantic area, would be bought at the risk of American security in the Pacific; the Japanese might well refuse American offers, and seize the occasion to fight their own war in conjunction with the Axis Powers.

Egypt, Iraq, Iran and the whole of Arabia would be subservient to the victors and the United States would no longer be assured of supplies of rubber, tin, copper, and other raw materials, or of access to the resources of the Middle East or the Dutch East Indies. German influence would be strong in Latin America where the Germans could exert political and economic concessions by threats or even in some cases by direct attack.

The possession of vast resources would influence Hitler's dreams of world mastery. Since the Germans were likely to impose some kind of totalitarian régime upon a defeated Great Britain or France, the countries of North America would alone remain free to continue their criticism of Nazi rule and to threaten the permanence of German hegemony. Hitler would therefore do all he could to interfere with American freedom of action and to undermine the structure of free government in the United States.

President Roosevelt and his Administration might be aware of these considerations. American opinion generally still did not face the possibility that the United States might be drawn into the war to defend American interests. There was a widespread belief—fostered by German propaganda ever since the treaty of Versailles—that American participation in the first World War had been unnecessary and that Great Britain and France had misused a victory won by American help. To most Americans the risk of being involved in war a second time by mistakes in their own policy appeared more real and more serious than the risks which the United States would run in the event of an Allied defeat. Few people outside a small circle of business men and technicians impressed by the German Air Force envisaged such a defeat, at all events on the scale of the French collapse in May and June, 1940. It was assumed that at the worst the United States would have a long time for preparation and that even if the Allies failed to destroy the Nazi régime or to stop German aggression in Europe, there was no immediate risk of the whole eastern Atlantic seaboard falling under German control.

In September, 1939, the Neutrality Act of 1937—an extreme manifestation of 'isolationist' opinion—was still in force. The principal provisions of the Act were that, on the outbreak of a war, the President was bound to issue a declaration naming the belligerents. Thereafter the supply of arms, ammunition and implements of war to the parties

thus named was illegal. The President and the Administration had made it clear before the war that they wanted the removal of this embargo which, obviously, would prejudice Great Britain and France. On the outbreak of war Mr. Roosevelt issued the prescribed proclamation, and called a special session of Congress for September 21. In this session a new Act repealed the embargo, reimposed the 'cash and carry' principle,<sup>1</sup> but exempted certain 'safe areas' from its operation. The Act continued the prohibition of loans to belligerent governments.

The counterpart to the view that America could keep out of the war was that the war could be kept out of America. To this end an attempt was made to establish a 'security zone' within which the peace of the western hemisphere would be undisturbed. The President had consulted the British Government about a plan of this kind early in June, 1939. He had proposed American air and naval patrols over the Western Atlantic in order to deny these waters to the operations of belligerents. In order to enable the patrols to be carried out he had asked for the use of bases at Trinidad, Santa Lucia, Bermuda and Halifax, and on the island of Fernando Noronha off the coast of Brazil. The British and Canadian Governments agreed to provide the required facilities, though they made certain reservations regarding their own belligerent rights.

A conference of the American Republics at Panama resolved on October 2, 1939, to establish a 'security zone' extending to 300 miles from the eastern and western coasts of the American continent. The idea did not, however, carry much conviction either in the United States or in Latin America. Mr. Hull told Lord Lothian that he did not object to the British view that, unless the patrol were effective, we should retain the full right of pursuit of enemy vessels within the zone. The British Government therefore acquiesced in the plan.

One of the problems, especially in this stage of the war, was that of explaining British policy to the American public. The Foreign Office realised—and warned the French—that direct propaganda was useless and even dangerous. On the other hand in a country of vivid publicity methods the Allied case might be given insufficient attention if it were set out in colourless information bulletins. In any case the Foreign Office had to watch American opinion carefully, if only to be able to form some idea of the possible reaction of the United States Government to important Allied decisions of policy. The Administration, especially in the twelve months before a Presidential election, would not go far beyond the limits set by public opinion in helping the Allies; it would also refuse to acquiesce for long in Allied

<sup>1</sup> i.e. materials supplied to belligerents could be carried only in non-American ships and after American title to them had been transferred. This provision had been included in the original Act, but its application had expired on May 1, 1939.

action which might be legitimate in itself but caused a public outcry in the United States.

Lord Lothian sent home frequent and very good analyses of the general movement of opinion. Early in 1940 he reported a mood of annoyance over the dislocation of American trade by the war, and particularly by the British interpretation of belligerent rights at sea. Lord Lothian thought that some strong press comment had been prompted by the State Department in a desire to show they were standing up for American rights and to warn us that we were inclined to count too much upon the known sympathies of the United States, and to pay less attention to American grievances than to those of other neutrals—e.g. Italy—possessing a greater nuisance value.

The mood of irritation over alleged British high-handedness soon spent its force. In March, 1940, a Anglo-French mission went to Washington to discuss the machinery of the blockade as it affected American interests. This mission stayed for seven weeks and secured agreement on most points in dispute. Meanwhile the Foreign Office had been considerably disturbed by a proposal of President Roosevelt to send Mr. Sumner Welles, Under-Secretary of State, to visit Rome, Paris, Berlin and London. The President thought that the Germans intended to open an offensive directed mainly against Great Britain. This offensive, and the retaliating action by the Allies, would make peace more difficult. The President therefore wanted to satisfy himself that everything possible had been done to end the war. Mr. Roosevelt said that his ideas of a peace settlement were practically the same as those of the British Government; a restoration of freedom to the Czechs and Poles; guarantees against the renewal of aggression, and the establishment of the 'four freedoms'.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister replied to the President on February 4 that the main difficulty lay in the question of guarantees. A demand for the removal of the Nazi government might encourage the Germans to overthrow the régime; it was more likely, owing to Hitler's propaganda, to unite them in a common fear of Great Britain and the United States. The Prime Minister thought that Mr. Welles' mission would cause a sensation, and that the probable effect would be to embarrass the democracies and assist German propaganda. At the same time the Foreign Office informed Lord Lothian that Hitler was using the threat of an irresistible offensive as part of the 'war of nerves', and in order to impress the neutrals who wanted an early peace even if it were inconclusive. Hitler would try to secure a peace which would leave the German armed forces intact, and establish

<sup>1</sup> Freedom from fear; freedom of religion; freedom of information (press and public meetings); freedom from want. President Roosevelt had laid down these conditions in an address to Congress on January 3, 1940.

himself in a position from which he could renew the war. We had thus been expecting a peace move from the Italian Government or the Pope or the President, but we had not anticipated anything so spectacular as a public mission fully advertised in advance.<sup>1</sup> The President seemed to be doing just what Hitler wished him to do.

Mr. Welles' mission was announced on February 9. He arrived in Rome on February 25 with Mr. Myron Taylor whom the President was sending on a special mission to the Pope. He went from Rome to Berlin (where he saw Hitler) and thence to Paris. He reached London on March 10. He went back to Rome through Paris and sailed to the United States on March 20. Mr. Welles gave the Prime Minister and Lord Halifax on March 11 details of a plan for ending the war: (i) The Germans should withdraw their troops from Poland and Bohemia<sup>2</sup> within an area to be agreed. (ii) There should be a rapid and progressive disarmament of the belligerents, linked with a plan of economic reconstruction. The British Ministers said very strongly that we could not trust Hitler; that even with a considerable measure of disarmament Germany could easily overrun a weak country, e.g. Roumania, and that nothing would restore confidence—the essential condition of disarmament—as much as a change of government in Germany. In a later conversation Mr. Chamberlain said that disarmament must begin with Germany. The Germans might ask about their security, and might not be satisfied by a direct Anglo-French undertaking not to attack them. We might give a formal undertaking to the United States not to attack Germany, but the terms would have to be defined with care in order to leave us free to fulfil obligations of assistance to a third party which might be a victim of German aggression.

The Foreign Office summed up the impressions left by Mr. Welles in a telegram to Lord Lothian on March 27. They (and the French) thought that Mr. Welles had been influenced by the arguments put forward by Mussolini, and by the arguments used to him in Berlin about the pretended invincibility of Germany. Mr. Kennedy, United States Ambassador in London, had also talked to him a good deal about the chances of general ruin if the war continued. It seemed likely that Mr. Welles would suggest to the President that he should outline peace terms which did not require the elimination of Hitler's régime, but would give security to the Allies.

On April 3 Mr. Roosevelt, in the presence of Mr. Hull and Mr. Welles, told Lord Lothian that he had been much impressed by the Prime Minister's proposal. He—and Mr. Welles—thought it important to convince the Germans that the Allies did not intend to break up Germany. A dramatic declaration on the subject would

<sup>1</sup> For other peace approaches, see p. 8, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office noted Mr. Welles' use of this term.

have a good effect. Mr. Roosevelt therefore suggested that the Prime Minister should address a letter to all Heads of neutral States explaining that the objective of the Allies was security in the widest sense for all nations. Lord Lothian pointed out the difficulty of drafting a declaration which would not give the impression that it was a proposal for peace. The Foreign Office considered that the President had misunderstood the Prime Minister's proposal. This proposal had nothing to do with German fears of dismemberment; it was brought forward with a view to the post-war security of Germany on the assumption that Germany must disarm before the Allies. We had already made public statements on the general line of Mr. Roosevelt's suggested declaration of war aims.

After the German invasion of Norway and Denmark the Foreign Office instructed Lord Lothian to say to the President that in the altered circumstances he would probably think a declaration inopportune. Another German act of aggression had taken place, and further attacks upon neutrals were very likely. Hence a statement primarily intended to reassure the German people would be open to misconstruction. Mr. Roosevelt did not continue with his proposal.

At the end of April Lord Lothian, in a long despatch on American opinion, wrote that there was no change in the American determination to keep out of the war. The invasion of the Scandinavian countries had deeply affected American opinion, but the European war was still regarded as the concern of Great Britain and France. For the time, public discussion was concentrated on the Presidential election. Lord Lothian summed up his views as follows: 'The United States is still dominated by fear of involvement and incapable of positive action. On the other hand the war is steadily drifting nearer to them, and they know it. They are not pacifists; on the contrary, they are highly belligerent by temperament. The point at which they will be driven to say, as we did after Prague, "Thus far and no further" depends mainly on the dictators and the events they precipitate. The President would like to take action vigorously on the lines of his own principle "Everything short of war." This is also true of Mr. Hull. All the other candidates, and especially the Republicans, . . . are paralysed by fear of being charged with a desire to get the United States into war. That does not mean that if they were elected they would not deal with the situation in a practical and realist manner.'

### CHAPTER III

#### The German offensive in the West: the Franco-German armistice and the question of the French fleet: British recognition of General De Gaulle as Leader of a Free French Movement

##### (i)

*The first fortnight of the offensive: move of the Netherlands and Belgian Governments to Great Britain: the Belgian military surrender and the refusal of King Leopold to leave Belgian territory: Mr. Churchill's visits to France.*

FROM the opening of the German offensive in the west on May 10 to the acceptance of an armistice by Marshal Pétain's Government on June 22 British diplomacy could do little except try to limit on the political side the consequences of military disaster.<sup>1</sup> The British diplomatic missions in the Low Countries and France transmitted and received messages on military matters, reported discussions on military measures with members of the Governments to which they were accredited, and sent home appreciations of the rapidly changing military situation and its political consequences. They carried out these activities during a time when governments and departments and embassy staffs were moving from place to place; communications were subject to long and frequent interruption, telegrams were held up, telephone connexions were broken, wireless messages subject to jamming, and work such as cyphering and decyphering had to be done in conditions which inevitably caused delay. The material for this period in the Foreign Office archives is like the débris left after a sudden flood. Nevertheless the two factors which stand out in a story full of loose ends, and at times hardly more than a series of episodes, are the absence of panic or despair, and the assumption that Great Britain would not surrender.

Owing to the violence and speed of the German attack on the Netherlands and the inability of the Allies to provide effective help, the Dutch could not hold out for long. On the morning of May 15

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chamberlain resigned on May 10 after his failure to secure support for a coalition government under his leadership. Mr. Churchill succeeded him as Prime Minister on this same day, and during the next few days completed the formation of the National Coalition Government which remained in office until May 23, 1945. Mr. Churchill then formed another government, without Labour participation, which held office until July 26, 1945, i.e. until after the declaration of the results of the general election of July 5.



M. van Kleffens, the Netherlands Foreign Minister, brought to Lord Halifax a communiqué issued during the previous night that the Commander-in-Chief had ordered the Netherlands forces to cease military resistance. The royal family and the Netherlands Government had already left the country, and M. van Kleffens had asked on May 13 whether they could establish themselves in London. Lord Halifax told M. van Kleffens that no one in Great Britain would wish to criticise the Commander-in-Chief or the Dutch people for their decision. It was, however, essential that a state of war should continue; the Commander-in-Chief must not negotiate or co-operate with the Germans, but merely accept their terms under protest. M. van Kleffens said that he and other members of the Netherlands Government agreed with this view.<sup>1</sup>

Events in Belgium moved hardly less rapidly towards catastrophe. On May 16 the Belgian Government left Brussels for Ostend. They appear to have made no arrangements in advance for the transfer of the government or administrative services from Brussels in the event of an invasion, and the confusion was increased by differences of view between the King of the Belgians and his Ministers. On May 19 Sir L. Oliphant telephoned that, according to the French Ambassador, M. Pierlot, M. Spaak and the Minister of National Defence had gone to Belgian Headquarters at Bruges, while the other Ministers had left for Havre. On May 22 the Belgian Ambassador and M. Gutt, the Belgian Finance Minister, raised with the Foreign Office the question of the evacuation of the King and of those members of the Government who were still in Belgium. A message from Admiral Sir R. Keyes,<sup>2</sup> however, reported that the King was

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill asked Lord Halifax on May 10 whether the ex-Emperor William II should be told that if he wished to leave the Netherlands he would be received with consideration and dignity in Great Britain. The possibility of offering the ex-Emperor an asylum had been considered in November, 1939, when a German attack on the Low Countries seemed likely. Sir N. Bland was then instructed that he should try to get the ex-Emperor moved to Sweden or Denmark, and only in the last resort to Great Britain. The Foreign Office now thought that, if the ex-Emperor asked to be allowed to come to England, we should receive him suitably, but that we should not go out of our way to invite him. Mr. Churchill, with the agreement of Lord Halifax, proposed that a more direct hint should be given. Sir A. Hardinge was asked to enquire the views of His Majesty the King. Sir A. Hardinge replied that His Majesty agreed with the suggestion, but that he did not know where the ex-Emperor would live in England; he 'presumed, however, that some one would be glad to offer him shelter.' Sir N. Bland was therefore instructed on May 11 to arrange for a message to be sent privately to the ex-Emperor. The latter declined the offer.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Sir R. Keyes had been appointed on May 10 special liaison officer with the King of the Belgians, with diplomatic status as an additional naval attaché at the British Embassy. He was independent of the Ambassador, but under the general orders of the Foreign Office. The difficulties of communication with the King and the members of his Government in Belgium were increased on May 20 when Sir L. Oliphant, on his own initiative, left by road for Havre. He was unable to reach Havre and on June 2 gave himself up to the Germans. The French Ambassador stayed at Bruges until May 23 and then left for England from Dunkirk.



determined to stay with the army and hoped that it might be reformed in France. It also became clear that the Ministers in Belgium had made the proposal for evacuation without consulting the King. Two days later Lord Halifax sent a message to the King through the Belgian Ambassador that the British Government were 'deeply impressed with the necessity' of maintaining the King and his Government 'in a place of safety.' They did not suggest that the King should leave at once, but said that, if the time came, they would 'make a representation' to the King 'which might make it easier for him to take a distasteful decision.' A similar message was sent to the King through Sir R. Keyes.

The Belgian Ministers left Bruges on the night of May 24-25, after failing to persuade the King to come with them. The Foreign Office now sent another message to the King through Sir R. Keyes (who in fact was supporting the King's decision to remain in Belgium). Meanwhile King Leopold on May 25 had written a personal letter to His Majesty the King maintaining that it was his duty to stay in Belgium. On May 26 MM. Spaak and Pierlot, who had reached England from Dunkirk, asked Lord Halifax whether His Majesty the King would make an appeal to King Leopold. The Foreign Office drafted a letter which, with His Majesty's approval, was sent to Sir R. Keyes for King Leopold. The letter explained the importance of preserving a united Belgian Government with full authority outside Belgian territory. If the King were able to remain at liberty in Belgium, and to act and speak for his people, he might be of great value in the establishment of such a rallying point for the Belgian nation. He would not be free, and might be taken as a prisoner to Germany. Sir R. Keyes gave this message to King Leopold early on May 27, but the King, after discussing it with the Queen Mother, decided that he would stay in Belgium.

Early on the morning of May 28 the Belgian army, at the King's orders, ceased firing. The Belgian Government on this day informed the Foreign Office<sup>1</sup> that they would fight the war to the end with Great Britain and France. The King was a prisoner, and any government inside Belgium could act only under duress. The existing Belgian Government was therefore the legal government of the country.

Some weeks before the opening of the German offensive Sir R. Campbell had sent to the Foreign Office disquieting reports on the political situation in France. He wrote that Laval and other opponents of M. Daladier were using the opportunity given by the failure of the

<sup>1</sup> The political acts of the King in relation to his own Government, and the question whether he was justified on military grounds in ordering his army to cease fighting, are outside the scope of this History.

Allies to save Finland and by their apparent inaction. Laval would certainly try for an early accommodation with Germany; an attack which he had recently made on M. Daladier in the Senate was probably intended to mark his first important re-entry into politics. Sir R. Campbell also regarded the disloyalty of some of M. Daladier's colleagues as among the causes of his fall. The reasons for this disloyalty had to be looked for 'in the mire into which parliamentary government in France has fallen.' Sir R. Campbell expected M. Reynaud to be given a fair trial; he could not have formed a Ministry unless M. Daladier, out of a sense of public duty, had agreed to support him. M. Reynaud had courage, resolution, adaptability, and imagination, and would press hard for more energy in the prosecution of the war. On balance, however, neither Sir R. Campbell nor the Foreign Office welcomed the change of government. In mid-April they had further confirmation of Laval's intentions, his bitterness against Great Britain and his wish to make concessions to Italy.

On the night of May 9-10—that is to say a few hours before the opening of the German offensive—Sir R. Campbell telegraphed that M. Reynaud had resigned—though the fact had not yet been made public—owing to his failure to get approval for his proposal to replace General Gamelin by General Weygand. Sir R. Campbell thought that M. Reynaud could not succeed in forming a Cabinet without M. Daladier's support, and that the choice of a new President of the Council lay between M. Herriot and M. Daladier 'with odds . . . slightly in favour of the former.' M. Reynaud, however, was able to reconstruct his Cabinet.

After the German break through at Sedan on May 14, Sir R. Campbell transmitted messages from M. Reynaud asking for more air assistance, and especially for more fighter aircraft, from Great Britain. The Foreign Office could not judge the strategic and technical considerations involved in a decision on the French appeal, but from this time until the end of French military resistance appeals for aircraft were of the gravest political as well as military importance and the French themselves used diplomatic as well as military channels in putting their case. Thus on the evening of May 15 M. Corbin went to see Sir A. Cadogan. He said that the German army and air force were using practically all their specialised material in a battle which might decide the war. If the French army were out of the war, the result would be fatal to Great Britain as well as to France. M. Corbin wondered whether we could ever win the war unless a man were found to direct the whole war effort as a single entity. Sir A. Cadogan took M. Corbin to mean that some one should have authority to order our fighters to join in the battle. He said that he would tell the Prime Minister and Lord Halifax at once of M. Corbin's view of the situation.

During his visit to Paris on May 16 the Prime Minister telegraphed a recommendation to the War Cabinet that, in spite of the risk to our own defences, we should send the additional air squadrons for which the French asked. The War Cabinet met at 11 p.m. on May 16 and accepted the recommendation. About mid-day on May 17 Sir R. Campbell telephoned that MM. Reynaud and Daladier had been much heartened by the Prime Minister and that there was an improvement in the morale of the French troops. Later on May 17, M. Reynaud seemed depressed at the news of the military situation. In the afternoon of May 18 Sir R. Campbell again reported an improvement in morale. Shortly afterwards he telephoned that Marshal Pétain had accepted the Vice-Presidency of the Council, and that the prestige of his name would reassure public opinion. M. Mandel had been appointed Minister of the Interior in order to secure a strong hand in dealing with fifth column or latent communist activity. General Weygand was coming back from Syria and would either succeed General Gamelin or become some kind of 'super-adviser' and thereby, in fact, take his place.

The Prime Minister sent a message to M. Reynaud just after mid-day on May 19 congratulating him on the 'strong, compact government' which he had formed, and also trying to encourage him on the military situation. M. Reynaud replied in the afternoon—again through Sir R. Campbell—assuring the Prime Minister of his inflexible determination that France should 'fight on, come what may.' Sir R. Campbell thought that M. Reynaud was in better heart than he had been in the morning. M. Reynaud had said that Marshal Pétain was very lucid, and that his advice would be of very great help and comfort. General Weygand had now returned, and would co-ordinate the French military effort. General Gamelin was being relieved of his post.

Two hours later Sir R. Campbell reported that he had seen M. Daladier and found him calm but dejected. Sir R. Campbell was taking the line in his conversations with the French Ministers that, if the Allies could check the present advance, they would be on the road to winning the war, but he found the Ministers 'suffering under the unexpectedness of the blow in the same way as the French troops went down under the first shock of the German onslaught. Alas, there is no Clemenceau.'

Sir R. Campbell reported in the evening of May 19, after seeing M. Mandel and (for a few moments) M. Reynaud, that M. Mandel was carrying out drastic measures against cowardice and defeatism, and was a first-class influence on the Government. The military position, however, continued to get worse. On the night of May 20-21 the Germans entered Abbeville. The communications of the Allied northern armies were now cut. Sir R. Campbell reported in the afternoon that the general situation in Paris was 'calm and depressing.'

The calmness was due less to fortitude than to 'stupification in view of the discovery that the French fortifications were not, as had been supposed, impregnable.' Nine months of easy warfare, German threats, and subterranean communism had told on French morale, and this morale was being lowered by the flood of refugees. The air was full of rumours, and there seemed to be some fifth column activity. MM. Reynaud and Mandel were doing everything possible to restore the situation, and had some success. The return of Marshal Pétain and of General Weygand was creating a certain amount of confidence, but it was 'late in the day.' Sir R. Campbell concluded with the words: 'People are not getting angry as I should like to see.'

The Prime Minister sent another message of general encouragement to M. Reynaud on May 21. Sir R. Campbell, who delivered the message, reported that M. Reynaud was pleased with it, and that he also found great comfort and support in Marshal Pétain, 'whose spirit was unshakeable, and brain still very lucid.' The Prime Minister went to Paris again on May 22 to hear General Weygand's plan for restoring the military situation. The plan did not succeed, and by the evening of May 25 it was clear to the British military authorities that if the northern armies—including the British Expeditionary Force—were not to be lost, the only course was to try to evacuate them by sea. The chances of carrying out this operation were very uncertain.

M. Reynaud came to London at his own suggestion on May 26. The Prime Minister told the War Cabinet on the morning of May 26 that he expected M. Reynaud would say to him that France could not continue the fight. He—the Prime Minister—would do his utmost to persuade M. Reynaud to carry on. M. Reynaud in fact told the Prime Minister and other members of the War Cabinet that, if France were 'entirely invaded,' they must reckon on the possibility of a move by Marshal Pétain in favour of an armistice. M. Reynaud had therefore come primarily to obtain British support for concessions to Mussolini in the hope of keeping Italy out of the war, and also to explore the larger possibility of securing some form of Italian mediation.

(ii)

*M. Reynaud's visit to London on May 26 with proposals for an approach to Mussolini: British attitude towards M. Reynaud's proposals: the situation after the Dunkirk evacuation: the entry of Italy into the war.*

The idea of offering concessions to Mussolini as a means of keeping him out of the war was not new. On the morning of the first day of

the German offensive Ciano had told Sir P. Loraine that there would be no immediate change in Italian policy; he could not say anything about the future.<sup>1</sup> It seemed probable, however, to the Foreign Office that Mussolini was being held back by the King of Italy, Marshals Badoglio and Graziani, Ciano and others, but that he had already taken his decision. On May 10-11 anti-British posters appeared in Rome, and there was evidence of other anti-British propaganda. Sir P. Loraine considered that Hitler wanted the Allies to be provoked into a declaration of war on Italy, and that Mussolini had been told to 'trail his coat.' The Foreign Office assumed that we were not strong enough to take what might otherwise have been the best course of forcing Mussolini to declare himself. We had also to show that Italy was the aggressor if we were to bring Turkey into the war in accordance with our agreement. In order to gain time, therefore, we might propose to discuss Italian 'claims', and try to buy off Mussolini, e.g. by the offer of a share in the control of the Suez canal and a more privileged position for the Italian population in Tunisia, or we might offer concessions on contraband control, but Mussolini would infer from these approaches that we were even weaker than he had supposed.

The Italians themselves, however, seemed to give a certain opening to an approach on the question of contraband control. On May 12 they published a long official report on the 'very grave damage' done to Italian interests by the Allied blockade. Sir P. Loraine was therefore instructed on the night of May 14-15 to tell the Italian Government that we were willing to discuss this memorandum with them. The Prime Minister also decided to send a personal message<sup>2</sup> to Mussolini. Mussolini's reply—received on May 18—was to refer to the British attempt to organise sanctions against Italy in 1935 and to the 'state of servitude' in which Italy found herself in the Mediterranean. He then said that he must keep his engagements. In reply to a message of May 14 from President Roosevelt Mussolini said that Italy intended to maintain her alliance with Germany, and could not remain absent at the moment when the fate of Europe was at stake. On the other hand the Italian Government agreed on May 18 to discuss contraband control.<sup>3</sup>

In view of Mussolini's answer to his message the Prime Minister did not think it desirable to issue the text of a statement proposed

<sup>1</sup> Sir P. Loraine had the impression that Ciano wanted the German offensive to fail, but thought that it would succeed. He said to Sir P. Loraine at the end of his interview: 'One day, though I hope not, I may have to tell you disagreeable things, but of one thing you can be absolutely certain—I shall never cheat you about anything I say.' The Foreign Office comment on this telegram was that Ciano had frequently lied to us, and might well do so again.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, and the reply, see Churchill, II, 107-8.

<sup>3</sup> These negotiations were broken off by Mussolini on May 28. See Medicott, I. 311.

by the Foreign Office in order to reduce the propaganda value of Mussolini's exploitation of Italian 'grievances'. The statement as drafted included a promise to Italy of equal status with the belligerents at the Peace Conference; Italian claims might then be dealt with 'as part of the general settlement of Europe.' The French Ministers, however—and especially M. Daladier—were most anxious to open 'political' negotiations with a view to immediate concessions to Italy. On May 23 M. Daladier told Sir R. Campbell that he and M. Reynaud agreed that a last effort must be made with Mussolini, and that we should ask President Roosevelt to enquire from him why Italy was at the brink of war with the Allies. If Mussolini stated his grievances, the United States Ambassador in Rome might say that President Roosevelt was prepared to report them to the Allied Governments.

With the approval of the War Cabinet the Secretary of State replied to the French Government on May 24 that we agreed with this proposal, and thought that the President might say that—on condition that Italy did not enter the war against the Allies—we were prepared to take 'reasonable' Italian claims into account at the end of the war, and would welcome Italian participation in the Peace Conference on a status equal to that of the belligerents. Since this offer would be more attractive if it were guaranteed by the United States, we might suggest to the President that he should offer such a guarantee and thus ensure that Italian claims would be dealt with as part of the general settlement of Europe. At the request of the French Government the terms of the proposed communication were changed to an offer to consider the claims immediately. The French thought it useless to suggest waiting until the end of the war; they had also been told by Mr. Bullitt that the President had no constitutional powers to offer a guarantee. We should therefore ask him merely to record the undertaking of the Allies to put into operation any agreement which might be reached. President Roosevelt accepted the Allied proposal, and sent a message accordingly to Mussolini on May 26. Meanwhile Lord Halifax had spoken in similar terms on the previous day to Signor Bastianini, Italian Ambassador in London.<sup>1</sup>

During this latter conversation Signor Bastianini asked Lord Halifax, without entering into detail, whether he could tell Mussolini that we would be willing to consider, in addition to questions involving Great Britain and Italy, 'general questions involving other countries.' Lord Halifax answered, also in general terms, that it was difficult to 'visualise such discussions while the war was being fought.' Signor Bastianini said that, once a discussion had begun, the war would be pointless, and that Mussolini wanted a lasting settlement

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office had received a hint from a member of the Italian Embassy that some private discussion of this kind might be of use.



in Europe and not merely an armistice. Lord Halifax replied that the British Government (and the French Government) would 'never be unwilling to consider any proposal made with authority that gave promise of the establishment of a secure and peaceful Europe'. The Ambassador then asked whether he could say to Mussolini that the British Government 'did not exclude the possibility of some discussion of the wider problems of Europe in the event of the opportunity arising.' Lord Halifax said that he could certainly speak in this way, since the 'secure peace in Europe' which we—and Mussolini—wanted could come 'only by the finding, through frank discussion, of solutions generally acceptable, and by the joint determination of the Great Powers to maintain them.'

M. Reynaud's second objective in his visit to London went beyond Lord Halifax's guarded statement to Signor Bastianini. M. Reynaud wanted not merely to keep Italy out of the war, but to try to use Italian mediation to obtain acceptable terms from Germany. The War Cabinet were bound to examine a proposal of this kind from the French, and to consider, firstly, whether there was any chance that Mussolini himself might be alarmed at the prospect of the domination of Europe by Hitler, and willing to try to persuade Hitler to offer acceptable terms and, secondly, whether on this hypothesis, and in view of the military situation, it might be desirable to settle on these terms.

After reaching London, M. Reynaud first saw the Prime Minister. He made it clear that the French Cabinet accepted General Weygand's view that French resistance could not last much longer. He mentioned the possibility of an approach to Italy, and hinted that, although he would not sign peace terms imposed upon France, he might be forced to resign or feel that he ought to resign. The Prime Minister answered that we did not intend to surrender, and that, if we and the French could hold out for another three months, the position would be very different. The Prime Minister reported the conversation to the War Cabinet in the afternoon of May 26. The War Cabinet discussed shortly whether we should make an approach to Italy. Lord Halifax thought that Mussolini might not want to see Hitler dominating Europe, and that he might wish to try to persuade Hitler to take a more reasonable attitude. The Prime Minister doubted whether anything could come of an approach, but said that the War Cabinet would have to consider the proposal.

Lord Halifax then saw M. Reynaud, and wrote down his (M. Reynaud's) proposal for an offer to Mussolini on condition that he would co-operate in obtaining a settlement of all European questions safeguarding the independence and security of the Allies, and sufficient as a basis of a just and durable peace. The Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, and Mr. Chamberlain joined later in the discussion.



They did not commit themselves, but M. Reynaud had the impression that they were unfavourable to the proposal. After M. Reynaud had left an informal meeting of War Cabinet Ministers was held. The Prime Minister's view was that if France could not defend herself, it would be better that she should get out of the war rather than drag us into a settlement which involved intolerable conditions. We should take care not to be forced into a weak position in which we invited Mussolini to go to Hitler and ask him to 'treat us nicely.' Hitler would certainly not offer terms which we could accept; for example, we should not be allowed to complete our rearmament. Lord Halifax agreed with the Prime Minister's argument, but thought that it might be worth while to find out how Mussolini regarded the position in terms of the balance of power.

The Prime Minister considered that anyhow we should not come to a decision until we knew how much of our army we were able to bring home from France. The Ministers finally agreed that Lord Halifax should circulate his draft of M. Reynaud's proposal, and an account of his conversation with Signor Bastianini for consideration by the War Cabinet on May 27. Mr. Churchill therefore telegraphed to M. Reynaud that he could not send him an answer before May 27.

On the morning of May 27—the first day of the Dunkirk evacuation—M. Reynaud sent a message to Lord Halifax through M. Corbin that he regarded it as a matter of great urgency that we should give what he called 'geographical precision' to the terms of our approach to Mussolini. Lord Halifax told M. Corbin that we should certainly be opposed to this suggestion; the difference between a general approach and the approach now proposed by M. Reynaud could not possibly turn the scale as far as Mussolini was concerned, while an offer not of general discussion but of definite concessions might have a lowering effect on Allied morale.

The War Cabinet met in the afternoon of May 27. The Prime Minister repeated his views on the futility of an approach which Mussolini would regard with contempt and which would ruin the integrity of our fighting position in Europe. Even if we mentioned no details, everyone would know what we had in mind. In any case Hitler was most unlikely to offer the kind of terms which we could consider. Our best help to M. Reynaud was to let him feel that, whatever happened to France, we were going to fight to the end. The War Cabinet again supported the Prime Minister's firm attitude. They considered, however, that although the proposed approach to Mussolini would secure no useful purpose, we should avoid—from the point of view of our relations with the French—a direct refusal. We had a good argument for delay since President Roosevelt had approached Mussolini and a simultaneous approach by Great Britain and France would only confuse the issue and create an impression of

weakness. On the late evening of May 27 Sir R. Campbell was instructed to give an answer on these lines to M. Reynaud, and to say that we did not preclude further consideration of the matter when we knew the result of Mr. Roosevelt's action. During the night of May 27-8 Lord Lothian reported that Mussolini's answer to President Roosevelt was 'entirely negative'. Sir A. Cadogan's robust comment on this telegram was 'of course Mussolini is not going to, and, in fact, dare not make any separate agreement with the Allies, even if he wanted to. He is simply wondering how much of the general "share-out" he will be allowed by his "Ally" to take, and whether he will ultimately get more, or less, by spilling Italian blood for it. We can't tell which way he will jump, but I hope we shan't delude ourselves into thinking that we shall do ourselves any good by making any more "offers" or "approaches".' On the evening of May 28 Sir P. Loraine reported that (with Lord Halifax's approval) he had asked Ciano whether there was any answer to the suggestion made by Lord Halifax to the Italian Ambassador on May 25. Ciano said that the subject fell under the general ban placed by Mussolini on any discussions with the Allies.

The French Government, however, persisted in their proposal to make an offer to Italy. The War Cabinet therefore discussed the matter once again on May 28. The discussion differed little from that of the two previous days. The general view, as before, was that an approach to Mussolini was most unlikely to produce terms which we could accept. The War Cabinet thus continued to regard the French proposal as most dangerous. We should find that the terms offered to us were unacceptable; there would then be a risk that the very fact of entering into discussions would have weakened Allied resolution to go on fighting. The War Cabinet agreed that we should tell M. Reynaud that we thought it useless to approach Mussolini; at the same time we should take care that our answer did not give the French a pretext for ending the struggle at once.

A message explaining the view of the War Cabinet was therefore sent by the Prime Minister to M. Reynaud—through Sir R. Campbell—on the night of May 28-9.<sup>1</sup> During the afternoon of May 29 Sir R. Campbell reported that he had discussed the Prime Minister's message briefly with M. Reynaud, and later with M. Daladier. M. Reynaud inclined to the Prime Minister's view, but admitted that he was in a difficult position with his colleagues. Sir R. Campbell had pointed out to M. Daladier the catastrophic effect of isolated action by France. M. Daladier said that there could be no question of such action. On May 30, however, he raised the matter again and, in spite of Sir R. Campbell's arguments, insisted on a direct appeal to Mussolini. He persuaded his colleagues to make this approach.

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 109-11.

The answer was a refusal; Ciano, in giving this reply to the French Ambassador in Rome, said that the Italian decision to enter the war had been taken, and that only the date remained to be settled.

Meanwhile on May 28 M. Reynaud had proposed an appeal to the United States. He realised that for the present the United States could give no effective help,<sup>1</sup> but he had in mind the moral result of a favourable answer. Sir R. Campbell suggested that M. Reynaud should consult Mr. Bullitt, United States Ambassador in Paris. M. Reynaud telephoned later that Mr. Bullitt approved of the plan. The Foreign Office thought that the proposal was most inexpedient and that it would give an impression of weakness or even of panic. If we made a statement, we ought to follow a suggestion from Field-Marshal Smuts that we should say only that we were continuing the war in any circumstances.<sup>2</sup> We wanted nothing for ourselves, but were concerned only with the defence of liberty for the world against Nazi domination. Would the United States help us or did they intend to stand aside and do nothing?

On the night of May 28-9 the Secretary of State instructed Lord Lothian that we were opposed to M. Reynaud's plan, but that Field-Marshal Smuts' suggestion might help the President in accelerating the evolution of opinion in the United States. The President himself, however, must be the judge of the matter. Lord Lothian replied on the evening of May 29. He was not in favour of an Allied appeal. He also telephoned later in reply to a telegram from the Foreign Office reporting a French suggestion that President Roosevelt should be asked to send the United States fleet to the Mediterranean. Lord Lothian said that the President had told him that the United States fleet must stay in the Pacific until any threat to the British fleet compelled a transfer of ships to the Atlantic. On the night of May 31-June 1 Lord Lothian reported that the President had telegraphed to Mr. Bullitt his strong disapproval of the French proposal for an appeal, since it would be taken as an attempt to influence the policy of the United States. M. Reynaud therefore dropped the plan for a time.

The unexpected success in saving the personnel of the British expeditionary force had far-reaching effects on British morale. Resistance to a German attempt at invasion, which seemed likely, was not a

<sup>1</sup> M. Léger told Mr. Bullitt on May 18 that M. Reynaud was considering a personal appeal to President Roosevelt to obtain a declaration of war from Congress. Mr. Bullitt said that Congress would certainly not agree to a declaration of war.

<sup>2</sup> Field-Marshal Smuts made this suggestion on May 27 to the British High Commissioner in South Africa.

'forlorn hope'. The British people now had an immediate objective to work for in re-equipping the army which had come back from France. Moreover there were elements of real victory in the actual evacuation. This passage of so many thousands of men<sup>1</sup> across the Channel shewed the significance of sea power, and the strength of the Royal Air Force. The land forces were carrying out a retreat, but the Air Force was attacking. The Germans were not masters of the sea and air; unless they obtained this mastery, they could not invade Great Britain.

These considerations had an opposite effect on the French. The British were alone, but they had withdrawn behind the 'moat defensive' of their house. The French were alone with the victorious German forces already in occupation of a large part of France and continuing their advance by tactics which the French army had been unable to withstand. To the French there seemed to be no motive left for resistance. French armies indeed had fought and won campaigns against worse odds. They had done so under resolute leadership which was now wanting.

The drift towards surrender was harder to resist because the counsels of despair came from a quarter where they might have been least expected. M. Reynaud had brought Marshal Pétain into his Government and had given the highest military command to General Weygand because he had thought—and, at first, rightly—that these appointments would do much to restore confidence.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately these two soldiers took the lead in advocating political as well as military surrender. General Weygand had proposed on May 25 an immediate consultation with Great Britain on the question of continuing the war. Marshal Pétain had supported his argument, but M. Reynaud had refused to accept their proposal. Four days later—after the Belgian surrender—General Weygand returned to the question. During the night of May 29–30 Sir R. Campbell telegraphed that M. Reynaud had read to him a letter from General Weygand to the effect that the time might come—with a complete break-through on the Somme-Aisne-Maginot line—when, notwithstanding her will to do so, France might find herself unable to continue effectively the struggle to defend herself. M. Reynaud told Sir R. Campbell that, as long as he were in control, and there were troops left to fight, France would fight on. On May 31 the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, and General Dill<sup>3</sup> went to Paris for a meeting of the Supreme War Council. At the end of the meeting—which was called for military discussions—the Prime Minister stated that we intended to go on with

<sup>1</sup> The total number of British and French troops evacuated in nine days was 338,226, of whom nearly 200,000 were British.

<sup>2</sup> General Weygand himself had described the shock which followed the break-through at Sedan as reminiscent of the *grande peur* of 1789.

<sup>3</sup> General Dill succeeded General Ironside as C.I.G.S. on May 27, 1940.

the war, if necessary, from the New World. He also spoke of the importance of a close contact between Great Britain and France. Mr. Attlee supported the Prime Minister's statement and M. Reynaud said that, if one country 'went under', the other must continue the struggle.

Four days later, in a despatch on the political situation, Sir R. Campbell thought that the French Government had given up the original idea of a move to Touraine if they had to leave Paris, and that they would go to Bordeaux. They would probably carry out this plan, but the next stage was uncertain. MM. Reynaud and Mandel maintained that France would never make terms, even if the Government had to move to North Africa. M. Reynaud tended to qualify this statement by adding 'so long as I am in control.' Sir R. Campbell feared that the forces inside and outside the Government favourable to a composition with Germany might become too strong; he regarded Laval and Flandin as the most dangerous figures. An offer of a separate peace to France might soon be made. A refusal would be less certain at Bordeaux, with the Government in confusion, and the Germans sweeping across France to the Atlantic coast. The chances of a move of the Government to North Africa or elsewhere were not high, especially if the Germans offered lenient terms.

On June 5 Sir R. Campbell again wrote that he had not much faith in the ability of the French to hold the Germans. He thought London a more suitable place than North Africa for the French Government; an offer to receive the Government there might be the determining factor in a decision against a separate peace. Later in the evening of June 5, Sir R. Campbell telegraphed that Marshal Pétain, after having heard that we could not meet the insistent French demand for twenty more fighter squadrons, had told M. Reynaud that there was 'nothing left but to make peace. If you do not want to do it, you can hand over to me.'

Once again, therefore, this demand that the British Government should use the whole of their fighter resources in the battle in France became of the highest political as well as military importance. Sir R. Campbell and General Spears<sup>1</sup> did their utmost to convince M. Reynaud of the impossible position in which they were putting the British Government. When he told Sir R. Campbell of Marshal Pétain's demand, M. Reynaud asked whether the British Government fully realised how serious the position was. Sir R. Campbell said that they were aware of the facts, and were giving as much help as possible, but if they denuded the British Isles of the whole of their air defences on the eve of an invasion, they would incur an 'unforgivable responsibility'. Nevertheless in the afternoon of June 7

<sup>1</sup> Major-General E. L. Spears had been sent by the Prime Minister to Paris in the last week of May as his personal representative.

M. Corbin made a personal appeal to Lord Halifax. He repeated his view that there was a lack of co-ordination on the Allied side in the whole conduct of the battle. The German method was to attack one enemy at a time; therefore we ought to find where the greatest risks lay and to concentrate our efforts in order to prepare for them. M. Corbin thought that our hesitation was due to fear of air raids. Lord Halifax answered that there was no question of any fear of air raids. The point was that if Germany were able to destroy our aircraft factories, the situation would be desperate for France as well as for Great Britain.

The British Government had in fact increased their air assistance—in spite of heavy losses—to the utmost limit short of the twenty-five fighter squadrons which were the bare minimum essential to the defence of the British Isles, but they were only too right in thinking that air support could not save the French armies. The last phase of the German attack had opened on June 5 and early on June 9 Rouen had fallen. On this day the enemy also reached Vernon on the Seine and Compiègne at the junction of the Oise and the Aisne. Mussolini now decided that he could safely implement his decision to enter the war, and indeed, that, if he waited any longer, the Germans might not think it necessary to reward him for his belligerency and might even—in their own German interests—protect the French against Italian rapacity. On June 3 Ciano told Sir P. Loraine that the Italian entry into the war would not take place on June 4, but that it was imminent.<sup>1</sup> On June 7 Ciano said that the change might come in the following week. He asked how Great Britain could continue the war. Sir P. Loraine said that he would put the question differently. We 'had not got the habit of being beaten in war; we had no intention of surrendering, and, if we did not surrender, the war continued *ipso facto*.'<sup>2</sup>

Eleven days after the Italian entry into the war the Foreign Office sent a circular telegram to all British Missions calling attention to an answer to a parliamentary question on June 19. The answer was to the effect that, in view of the unprovoked entry of Italy into the war against us, we held ourselves entitled to reserve full liberty of action in respect of any undertakings given by us in the past to the Italian Government concerning the Mediterranean, North or East African and Middle Eastern areas.

<sup>1</sup> Sir P. Loraine had earlier telegraphed that on May 16 Mussolini had displayed to Italian party leaders in the Trentino a map shewing Italian claims. These claims included Nice, Savoy, Corsica, Tunis, Malta, Cyprus, a protectorate over Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, and a joint Italo-Egyptian protectorate over the Sudan. Gibraltar was to be internationalised.

<sup>2</sup> Sir P. Loraine explained why we should be able to continue the war. Ciano was silent for a few moments. He then asked, 'Is that what you really think?' Sir P. Loraine noted that the idea of a long war made Ciano 'very thoughtful, and rather glum.' On receiving the final declaration of war from Ciano on June 10 Sir P. Loraine made no comment.



(iii)

*The French Government in Touraine and at Bordeaux: Mr. Churchill's visits to France on June 11-12 and June 13: M. Reynaud's appeals to President Roosevelt: French request for British acquiescence in an enquiry about the conditions of a Franco-German armistice: first British reply of June 16 to the French request: British offer of an Anglo-French union: resignation of M. Reynaud: formation of a government by Marshal Pétain.*

The French Government moved to Touraine on June 10. Sir R. Campbell travelled by road during the night of June 10-11 to a chateau at Cléré which had been allotted by the French authorities to the British Embassy. The French plan of evacuation to Touraine had been based on the assumption that heavy air attacks might compel the removal of administrative departments from Paris. As a protection against similar attacks in Touraine the departments were scattered over a wide area; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was at Langeais, and the Ministry of Finance at Chinon; M. Reynaud established himself at a chateau between Tours and Amboise, but nothing had been done to provide special telephone arrangements. On the morning of June 11 Sir R. Campbell reported that he had seen M. Baudouin, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and M. Charles-Roux.<sup>1</sup> Neither had heard any news since leaving Paris. About 300 telegrams had reached the Post Office at Tours; the cyphering clerks, after an all-night journey, were too tired to deal with them. Sir R. Campbell came to the conclusion that the 'wiser heads' regarded the move to Touraine merely as a stage on the road, and that the only question was whether the next move would be to Bordeaux or to Brittany.

In the afternoon of June 11 Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden—at this time Secretary of State for War—and General Dill flew to General Weygand's headquarters and stayed there until June 12.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the military situation. In his account of the meeting to the War Cabinet in the afternoon of June 12 the Prime Minister said that M. Reynaud had told him that Marshal Pétain had made up his mind that France would have to ask for peace. The Prime Minister thought that M. Reynaud was determined to fight on; Admiral Darlan had declared that he would never surrender the French fleet to the enemy. In the last resort he would order it to Canada. There was, however, a danger that Admiral Darlan might be overruled by the politicians. The Prime

<sup>1</sup> M. Charles-Roux, formerly French Ambassador at the Vatican, had succeeded M. Léger as Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when M. Reynaud reorganised his Government on May 18.

<sup>2</sup> For the Prime Minister's account of this meeting, see Churchill II, 136-142.



Minister had insisted that the French Government must consult us before coming to any final decisions. M. Reynaud had agreed that such consultation must take place, but the War Cabinet decided to reinforce, through Sir R. Campbell, this all-important request. The Foreign Office indeed was already much concerned over the question of the French fleet. They thought that the Germans would ask for the fleet and mercantile marine, and that it was doubtful whether the French would hand them over to us since to do so would be to increase the severity of any armistice or peace terms. The French would not consider the long-range view that in strengthening Great Britain they would be increasing the chances of a British victory and of their own restoration. They would not ask for an armistice until they had lost all hope of ultimate victory. Sir R. Campbell, in answer to a question on June 3 from the Foreign Office, also thought that the Germans would demand the surrender of the fleet, and that the French Government might give it up.

The Foreign Office suggested that Admiral Sir D. Pound, First Sea Lord, Lord Hankey, and Sir A. Cadogan should meet to consider the question. They met on June 7, and agreed that the Germans were likely to ask for the fleet, and would continue to 'batter' the French until they handed it over. It was most improbable that Admiral Darlan, or any one else, would order the fleet to Great Britain or the United States. Even if the fleet sailed to British waters, we should be in the intolerable position of watching the continued devastation of French towns from the air for which we should be regarded as responsible as long as we held the fleet. On the other hand the humiliation of handing over a fleet was so great that a naval commander would do his utmost to avoid it. We should aim, therefore, at getting the fleet scuttled.<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of June 13 Sir R. Campbell called on M. Reynaud. M. Reynaud—who had sent an appeal to President Roosevelt on June 10 for an American promise of all assistance short of an expeditionary force—now told Sir R. Campbell that he had decided to send another message making it clear that the salvation of France, as he described it, depended upon a declaration of war in the immediate future by the United States. M. Reynaud had also telephoned to the Prime Minister asking him to come to a meeting of the Supreme War Council at Tours.

The Prime Minister had sent a personal message to Mr. Roosevelt

<sup>1</sup> In a memorandum—for which the Prime Minister asked on June 11—setting out the 'considerations which arise and the demands we should make' in the event of a French collapse, the Foreign Office considered that, if the French Government took refuge outside France, there would be no difficulty about securing the transfer of the fleet to British or French colonial ports. If, however, the French asked for an armistice, the Germans would almost certainly demand the surrender of the fleet. The best course, therefore would be for the fleet to be scuttled before a request was made for an armistice.

after his return to London on June 12.<sup>1</sup> He told the President of the situation and asked him to do all he could to strengthen M. Reynaud. He had said to the French that, whatever happened, we should go on fighting: we thought that 'Hitler could not win the war or the mastery of the world until he had disposed of us, which has not been found easy in the past, and which perhaps will not be found easy now.' Before he left for Tours Mr. Churchill telegraphed to the President that the French had again asked for a meeting and that this summons meant that a crisis had arrived. Anything which Mr. Roosevelt could say or do to help the French might 'make the difference.' The Prime Minister took with him to Tours Lord Halifax, Lord Beaverbrook (Minister of Aircraft Production) and Sir A. Cadogan.<sup>2</sup> As Mr. Churchill had expected, the crisis had come. M. Reynaud summarised to the British Ministers his message of June 10 to President Roosevelt, and said that he proposed to send a further message explaining that 'the last hour had come', and that the fate of the Allied cause lay in the hands of America. He would be unable to persuade the French Government to carry on unless Mr. Roosevelt's reply contained a firm assurance of immediate aid. The French Government could retreat elsewhere, but, if Hitler occupied the whole of France, the population would be systematically corrupted, and 'France would cease to exist.' Hence the Council of Ministers had asked M. Reynaud on June 12 to enquire what would be the attitude of Great Britain if France had to apply for an armistice. He was aware of the Anglo-French agreement not to make a separate peace,<sup>3</sup> but France had already sacrificed everything, and it would be a shock to French opinion if Great Britain failed to concede that France was physically unable to carry on.

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the main part of this message, see Churchill, II, 158.

<sup>2</sup> For a full account of this meeting, see Churchill, II, 158-62.

<sup>3</sup> The British Government had been favourable to an Anglo-French declaration not to conclude a separate armistice or peace treaty because they regarded such a declaration as a means of countering German propagandist attempts to spread in France distrust of British motives. A declaration of this kind, however, implied a previous agreement on war aims. The French Government regarded an agreement on war aims as desirable since they were afraid that opinion in Great Britain might not allow the British Government to satisfy French demands for material guarantees against further German aggression. On October 23, 1939, the French Government had suggested a study of the necessary guarantees. The British Government, after consulting the Dominions, replied on December 22 that they regarded any discussion of a territorial settlement as premature, though they suggested that it would be desirable to encourage some form of closer co-operation between the States of south-east and central Europe. Meanwhile Mr. Chamberlain had raised the question of a declaration at the meeting of the Supreme War Council on December 19. After this meeting the Foreign Office prepared a draft text binding the two Governments (i) not to conclude a separate peace, and (ii) to continue the closest co-operation after the war. The text was approved at the meeting of the Supreme War Council on March 28, and published at once. The relevant clauses ran: [The British and French Governments] 'mutually undertake that during the present war they will neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement. They undertake not to discuss peace terms before reaching complete agreement on the conditions necessary to ensure to each of them an effective and lasting guarantee of their security.'

The Prime Minister pointed out that the destruction which M. Reynaud feared would come just as certainly if France were to surrender since Hitler could not be trusted to keep any pledges. If France stayed in the war, and if Germany failed to destroy England, 'the whole hateful edifice of Nazidom would topple over. Given immediate help from America, perhaps even a declaration of war, victory was not so far off.' Mr. Churchill said that in no case would Great Britain waste time in reproaches and recriminations but that 'did not mean that we would consent to action contrary to' the recent Anglo-French agreement. The Prime Minister suggested that M. Reynaud should send his message to President Roosevelt and that they should await the answer. The Prime Minister would himself support M. Reynaud's message. M. Reynaud agreed with this course. Mr. Churchill then referred to other factors in the situation. He said that the war would continue, whatever the decision of the French, and that the blockade would become increasingly effective. France, under German occupation, could not hope to be spared; there might thus arise bitter antagonism between the French and English peoples. M. Reynaud said that he viewed with horror the prospect that Great Britain might inflict the immense suffering of an effective blockade upon the French people. Even if the worst came, he hoped that Great Britain would make some gesture which would obviate the risk of antagonism between the two peoples.

After their return to London,<sup>1</sup> the British Ministers were given by Mr. Kennedy the text of the President's reply to M. Reynaud's message of June 10. The President said that he was particularly impressed by the French determination to continue to fight, and that the United States Government was doing everything possible to make available to the Allies the material so urgently required. The War Cabinet, which met at 10.15 p.m., agreed that, although the President had not said that the United States would declare war, no Head of a State would be likely to send such a message urging the French to prolong their sufferings unless he was certain that his country was coming to their aid. On the other hand the message might appear in a different light to the French who were looking for something more definite. The War Cabinet therefore thought that the Prime Minister should tell M. Reynaud of our interpretation of the message, and that the British Government should also send a message to the French Government emphasising the solidarity and indissoluble union of 'our two peoples and Empires.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Among the allegations made by the Government of Marshal Pétain in a statement to the United States Government (see below, p. 77) was an assertion that the British Ministers had refused an invitation to attend a French Council of Ministers. No such invitation, in fact, had been given to them.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's message to M. Reynaud and of the declaration (which was sent to M. Reynaud and also published in the press on June 14) see Churchill, II, 164-5.

The Prime Minister asked Mr. Kennedy whether the President would allow the publication of his message. Mr. Kennedy, after telephoning to the President, said that he (the President) was willing to allow publication, but that Mr. Hull disagreed. It appeared also that the President had heard that the meeting at Tours had been very successful, and that he did not realise how critical the situation was. The Prime Minister gave Mr. Kennedy a full account of the meeting for communication to the President. Mr. Churchill also sent a personal message to the President during the night of June 13-14 in which he told him that he could not exaggerate the critical character of the Tours meeting.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill urged the President very strongly to allow the publication of his reply to M. Reynaud's message of June 10.

At 12.30 a.m. on June 14 Sir R. Campbell telegraphed that German columns which had broken through at Evreux were moving southwards and might reach Tours during the day. At 5.15 a.m. he reported that the French Government were about to leave for Bordeaux, and did not expect to stay there for more than a short time. Sir R. Campbell thought that the political situation had become worse during June 13, and that, after the British Ministers had left Tours, rumours had begun to spread that Great Britain would liberate France from her engagements. M. Mandel had advised Sir R. Campbell and General Spears that the British Government should make clear, in documents which would have to be placed before the French Cabinet, that they did not intend to release the French Government from their engagements. M. Mandel said that the French Cabinet had spent half an hour in discussing the fate of the French navy in the event of an armistice. The discussion had been inconclusive, but the general opinion had been in favour of scuttling the fleet if Mr. Roosevelt rejected M. Reynaud's appeal. If a vote had been taken, a majority would have favoured an armistice. At 4.22 p.m. on June 14 Sir R. Campbell was instructed to ask M. Reynaud to help in denying the rumours that we had released the French Government from their engagements to us.

The Prime Minister heard from Mr. Kennedy on June 14 that he (Mr. Kennedy) had been told that President Roosevelt would not allow the publication of his message to M. Reynaud. Mr. Kennedy asked whether the Prime Minister would explain the position to M. Reynaud. The Prime Minister refused, and spoke strongly of the disastrous effect on French resistance of any sign that the President was now holding back. On June 15 the Prime Minister told the War Cabinet that Mr. Roosevelt had sent a personal telegram to him to the effect that his message had not been intended to commit the United States to military participation in the war. This could be

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 163-4.

done only by Congress. Hence the President could not agree to the publication of the message. With the approval of the War Cabinet the Prime Minister replied on June 15 that M. Reynaud would be disappointed at the decision. A declaration that, if necessary, the United States would enter the war might save France. Otherwise French resistance might crumble within a few days, and we should be left alone.<sup>1</sup>

Sir R. Campbell reached Bordeaux at 7 p.m. on June 14. He found that the accommodation provided for him was 50 km. from the city. He therefore appealed to M. Mandel, who was able to secure him some rooms in a hotel in Bordeaux. After dinner he went with General Spears to see M. Reynaud in order to give him the full text of the Prime Minister's message.<sup>2</sup> M. Reynaud had received only a fragmentary version of Mr. Roosevelt's answer to his appeal of June 10, but was disappointed that it contained no promise of a declaration of war. M. Reynaud seemed worn out. He said that he was faced with the possibility that Marshal Pétain would resign. He explained that when he had asked at Tours what would be the attitude of the British Government on the event of a French surrender he was speaking on behalf of the French Cabinet, and that his words did not necessarily represent his own views. Sir R. Campbell was afraid that most of M. Reynaud's colleagues were working on him in a defeatist sense, and that he was swaying 'backwards and forwards.' Sir R. Campbell proposed to try once more on June 15 to make it plain to the French Ministers—and especially to M. Baudouin—that we would be unable to condone a breach of the agreement not to conclude a separate peace.

The Foreign Office had answered at 2.45 p.m. on June 15 Sir R. Campbell's telegram asking for a clear statement, but the answer did not reach him in time for use on this day.<sup>3</sup> Sir R. Campbell was instructed that, whatever the military situation might be,<sup>4</sup> the British

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, pp. 166–7. See also below, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> He had telephoned the substance of the message before leaving Cléré. At the time of his interview with M. Reynaud Sir R. Campbell had not received the telegram of 4.22 p.m.

<sup>3</sup> Sir R. Campbell's first knowledge of the despatch of this telegram came in a reference to it in a telephone conversation of 11.50 p.m. (see below, p. 65). The telegram had not arrived by 2 a.m. on June 16. Sir R. Campbell was then given the text in cypher from the Foreign Office over the telephone (it was impossible to telephone *en clair* without risk that the wires might be tapped). The cyphering work, carried on under great difficulty by a small staff at Bordeaux, made it necessary for Sir R. Campbell to shorten his telegrams. In addition the transmission service was overburdened, and there were delays and uncertainties whether telegrams had actually been sent off. The War Cabinet and the Foreign Office had full confidence in Sir R. Campbell, and did not send him too many instructions.

<sup>4</sup> General Brooke reported on the evening of June 14–15 that, according to General Weygand, the French army was no longer capable of organised resistance or concerted action. In these circumstances the Prime Minister sent a message through Sir R. Campbell to M. Reynaud that the Allied cause would be served best by stopping the disembarkation of British troops in France until the situation was more clear.

Government felt very strongly 'the absolute necessity of refusing to take any action by way of negotiating with Hitler for a separate peace.' We hoped that, if the French Government decided to move overseas, they would consider coming to London. It was of vital importance that they should keep 'all the resources they can in being' and particularly their fleet and air force, 'to be continuously employed for the purpose on which French restoration depends.'

Meanwhile Sir R. Campbell reported<sup>1</sup> at 1.30 p.m. on June 15 that M. Reynaud's message of June 14 to President Roosevelt was to the effect that the decision of France to continue the war depended on the receipt of an assurance from the President that the United States would enter the war at a very early date. The President had not yet answered the message. Sir R. Campbell thought that, if no assurance were received, the French would come rapidly to a decision to ask for an armistice. Later in the afternoon Sir R. Campbell reported that the French military view seemed to be that the Germans could be 'induced to stop', and that there was danger of bolshevism if an armistice were not concluded. At 6.5 p.m. Sir R. Campbell telegraphed that M. Reynaud was holding a Cabinet meeting, and would resign if he failed to get enough support. At the least he expected the resignation of four or five Ministers, including Marshal Pétain. M. Reynaud said that he would never be a party to the surrender of the fleet; Sir R. Campbell assumed from this statement that some of M. Reynaud's colleagues might agree to it.

On the night of June 15-16 the Prime Minister telegraphed to the President that, in his previous message, he had not known the text of M. Reynaud's 'final' appeal. He now thought 'there was no getting away from the fact' that, if the President's reply did not contain the assurance for which M. Reynaud asked, the French would seek an armistice, and might surrender the fleet. Mr. Churchill said that he was not thinking in terms of an American expeditionary force—which he knew to be out of the question—but of the moral effect of an American decision.

Meanwhile the President had told Lord Lothian and the French Ambassador on June 15 that it would be useless to initiate a campaign by radio and platform in favour of a declaration of war since the immediate result would be the political destruction of the authority of his Government. Mr. Hull confirmed this view. The President then said that in the circumstances it was very difficult even to suggest giving advice to the French but that in his opinion they would be no worse off if the government, part of the army and the fleet moved overseas than if they accepted an armistice. Germany could not go on fighting on all fronts forever, and as long as Great

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Campbell also said that all telegrams were being sent jointly by General Spears and himself. General Spears returned to London on June 17,



Britain, France and the United States controlled the seas, the blockade would eventually be successful. The French Ambassador replied that this was cold comfort for France when she was confronted by a terrible decision and wanted immediate aid.<sup>1</sup>

About midnight on June 15-16 Sir R. Campbell was able to telephone—in veiled language—to London. He said that M. Reynaud had received an answer from President Roosevelt to his 'final appeal'. The answer was unsatisfactory, and the question put to the Prime Minister at Tours had now been put again 'in a most brutal form'. Lord Halifax telegraphed to Sir R. Campbell to impress upon the French that they should on no account come to a final decision before a personal exchange of views with us. During the course of the night Sir R. Campbell sent a message from M. Reynaud to the Prime Minister. The message represented a formal decision taken after a meeting presided over by the President of the Republic; M. Reynaud asked insistently for an answer early in the morning. M. Reynaud said that the French Government considered that they could not leave France unless it were established that the peace terms imposed by Hitler and Mussolini were unacceptable. The Council of Ministers expected that the terms would be unacceptable, but they wished for the authorisation of the British Government to enquire through the United States Government what the conditions of an armistice would be. If the British Government consented to this step, M. Reynaud had authority to declare that the surrender of the French fleet would be an unacceptable condition. If the British Government refused their consent to the French proposal, M. Reynaud would probably have to resign. Sir R. Campbell thought that in this case M. Reynaud's successor might not maintain the decision not to surrender the fleet.

Sir R. Campbell and General Spears had argued that the Germans would disregard their terms whenever it suited them and that the fate of the French people would be no better, and might be worse if they surrendered. M. Reynaud said that he had used these arguments, but had not convinced his colleagues. General Weygand had put great pressure on them, and had said that the French army might break up at any moment.<sup>2</sup>

The War Cabinet decided on the morning of June 16 to send a short message to M. Reynaud stating our readiness to release the French Government from their engagement to the limited extent necessary for an enquiry about the German terms, but only on condition that the French fleet was immediately sailed to British

<sup>1</sup> See also below, p. 80, for this conversation.

<sup>2</sup> Sir R. Campbell reported that M. Mandel strongly advised the British Government not to condone a request for an armistice.



harbours. The main argument indeed for acquiescence was that, if we sent a refusal, M. Reynaud's Government would resign and would be succeeded by another government which might not keep the fleet out of German hands. Sir R. Campbell was instructed (telegram 368) at 12.35 p.m. to deliver a message on the lines of the War Cabinet decision. At 3.10 p.m. a second message (telegram 369) was sent to Sir R. Campbell to tell M. Reynaud that we expected to be consulted as soon as any armistice terms were received.<sup>1</sup>

Within a very short time, however, Sir R. Campbell was told to ask M. Reynaud to delay action on telegram 368 until he had received a further and most important communication from the Prime Minister. Later Sir R. Campbell himself was told to suspend action on the instructions sent to him in the two telegrams. This communication summed up a series of rapid decisions taken in London during the morning and afternoon of June 16. On the previous morning Mr. Chamberlain had brought to the attention of the War Cabinet an unofficial memorandum which had been shewn to him and other Ministers proposing some dramatic expression of Anglo-French unity. Mr. Chamberlain said that the form of unity proposed—joint Parliaments and a joint Cabinet—did not seem to have been fully thought out. The War Cabinet was doubtful about the proposal, and inclined to think that frequent meetings of the Supreme War Council, if the French Government came to Great Britain, would produce adequate machinery for very close co-operation. Sir A. Cadogan was also doubtful about the plan.<sup>2</sup>

After the meeting of the War Cabinet on the morning of June 16, however, Lord Halifax had asked Sir R. Vansittart to draft a declaration which might strengthen M. Reynaud's position. Sir R. Vansittart had drawn up a document in consultation with General de Gaulle<sup>3</sup> and others. General de Gaulle had also seen the Prime Minister during the morning, and had told him that he and M. Corbin had been concerned at the instructions sent in telegram 368 to Sir R. Campbell. The Prime Minister therefore thought it desirable to tell Sir R. Campbell to suspend action on these instructions and to ask the War Cabinet to consider the draft declaration.

The War Cabinet met at 3 p.m. During the discussion of the draft they were informed of an announcement on the French wireless that the Council of Ministers would meet at 5 p.m. to discuss whether

<sup>1</sup> For the text of these two telegrams, see Churchill, II, 181-2.

<sup>2</sup> Sir A. Cadogan was out of London from the afternoon of June 15 until after the Cabinet meeting at 3 p.m. on June 16. It is impossible to recover the motives which led to this proposal. They seem to have come in part from a feeling—perhaps not consciously recognised—that the plan, notwithstanding its practical difficulties, would go some way to remedying the lack of leadership from which above all the French were suffering. There was little time to consider whether, in fact, the proposal might not be completely misconstrued by French opinion.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 74, note 2.

further resistance was possible. They also heard that M. Reynaud had said to General de Gaulle that he felt he could hold the position if at the time of the meeting he had a favourable answer on the proposed declaration about which General de Gaulle had telephoned to him. The War Cabinet therefore approved the draft, with certain amendments, and agreed that General de Gaulle should take it at once to M. Reynaud, and that a telephone message should be sent to M. Reynaud informing him of the draft in time for the meeting of the Council of Ministers. They also agreed that the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, and Sir A. Sinclair should meet M. Reynaud at the earliest possible moment to discuss the draft.<sup>1</sup>

General de Gaulle's message that he was bringing the proposed declaration reached M. Reynaud when he was discussing the earlier British replies (telegrams 368 and 369) with Sir R. Campbell and General Spears. M. Reynaud's comment on the British conditions of assent to the French request was that the withdrawal of the French Mediterranean fleet to British ports would invite an immediate seizure of Tunis by Italy. He was, however, greatly relieved by General de Gaulle's message, and went away to read it to the President of the French Republic. After he had left Sir R. Campbell and General Spears received the telegram suspending action on telegrams 368 and 369. They sent a message to tell M. Reynaud that the two earlier telegrams should be considered as cancelled.<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister had gone to the train for the port of embarkation from which he intended to sail to Brittany to meet M. Reynaud when a message arrived from Sir R. Campbell that a new ministerial crisis had arisen, and that the proposed meeting in Brittany could not be held.<sup>3</sup> Shortly afterwards Sir R. Campbell telephoned that M. Reynaud had resigned, and at 11.30 p.m. the French wireless announced that Marshal Pétain had been asked to form a new administration in which General Weygand would be Vice-President.<sup>4</sup>

Sir R. Campbell and General Spears had been told by M. Reynaud that the Prime Minister's message—which he had read twice to the Council of Ministers—had not persuaded them. They

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<sup>1</sup> For the final text of the declaration, see Churchill, II, 183-4. The amendments were not of great importance. One of them changed 'The two Parliaments will unite' to 'The two Parliaments will be formally associated.' It was thought impracticable for them to legislate as one body, but they might occasionally hold joint sessions.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noticed that the instructions to Sir R. Campbell used the words 'delay' and 'suspend'—not 'cancel'.

<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister had proposed to sail in a cruiser to Concarneau, and to meet M. Reynaud on board ship at noon on June 17. General de Gaulle thought that the time and place would suit M. Reynaud.

<sup>4</sup> In fact M. Chautemps became Vice-President of the Council, and General Weygand Minister of Defence.

tried to encourage M. Reynaud, and then saw M. Mandel for a moment before calling on M. Jeanneney, President of the Senate, in the hope that he might persuade the President of the Republic to insist that M. Reynaud should form a new administration. They asked M. Jeanneney to make it clear to M. Lebrun that the Prime Minister's offer could not be extended to a government which had entered into negotiations with the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

M. Reynaud apparently had not told the Council of the conditions laid down in the two earlier messages (in telegrams 368 and 369) of June 16.<sup>2</sup> He had said, however, that he assumed that the Council would regard the surrender of the fleet as an unacceptable condition. There had been general assent to this statement.

(iv)

*Refusal of Marshal Pétain's Government to send the French fleet out of German reach: the Franco-German armistice; British protests to the French Ministers with regard to the terms about the fleet.*

The first act of the new French Government was to ask, through the Spanish Government, for the terms under which Germany would agree to an armistice.<sup>3</sup> M. Baudouin, who was now Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent for Sir R. Campbell at 1.0 a.m. on June 17 to tell him of this action, and to give him a formal assurance that the French would not accept any condition involving the surrender of the fleet. Sir R. Campbell took formal note of this assurance.<sup>4</sup>

M. Baudouin said that the French Government expected the Germans to ask for the fleet. This was also the view of the Foreign Office. The decisions taken in London and the instructions sent to Sir R. Campbell aimed at getting the fleet away from French metropolitan ports or scuttled before the German demand was made. Thus the actual terms regarding the fleet seem to have surprised the Foreign Office and the War Cabinet. In retrospect indeed it seems curious that little account was taken of the possibility that the Germans might hesitate to ask for the surrender of the fleet. A similar

<sup>1</sup> For the text of Sir R. Campbell's telegram, see Churchill, II, 188-9.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the Council of Ministers had thus not received any release from the British Government not to negotiate an armistice except by mutual agreement.

<sup>3</sup> A similar question to Italy was transmitted through the Papal Nuncio.

<sup>4</sup> A few hours earlier Admiral Darlan had said to him that, as long as he (Admiral Darlan) could issue orders to the fleet, we had 'nothing to fear.'

demand had been made to them in 1918. They had replied by scuttling their ships at the moment of surrender. They might well fear that the French would follow this precedent or—a more likely course—send their fleet to British waters. In order to avoid either risk the Germans might permit the French to keep nominal possession of a dismantled fleet in ports mainly within German and Italian reach. This offer would allow the French to claim, speciously, that they were keeping their pledge to Great Britain; it would also enable the Germans to persuade or compel the French later on to give them direct possession of the ships.

When the War Cabinet met at 11 a.m. on June 17 Lord Halifax explained that, as M. Reynaud had been told to suspend action on the message in telegram 368, it was uncertain whether he had shewn it to other French Ministers. Sir R. Campbell was therefore being instructed to tell the new French Government (if he had not already done so) of telegram 368 and to make the communication in 369. Two hours later, in order that Marshal Pétain should be absolutely clear about the British position Sir R. Campbell was instructed that a 'necessary pre-condition' of our assent to the French application for an armistice had been that the French fleet should sail to British ports. The French appeared to have asked for an armistice, but there was no news that the fleet had sailed. In these circumstances the 'vital condition' had not been fulfilled. Sir R. Campbell was instructed to go on urging the French Government, if they persisted in seeking an armistice, to sail the fleet at once.

At noon on June 17 Marshal Pétain had broadcast an announcement that he had applied for an armistice. Sir R. Campbell was therefore instructed at 5.45 p.m. to see Marshal Pétain and to explain that failure to implement our condition about the fleet 'would compromise the successful continuance of the struggle here—which we are determined to continue in any case and at any cost, and on which now depend the salvation and liberation of France.'<sup>1</sup> In a telegram received at 4.25 p.m. Sir R. Campbell had reported that he had told Marshal Pétain that while we gladly received his assurance that the fleet would not be handed over to the Germans, it was 'absolutely essential' that the fleet should be in British control when the Germans asked for it. Two hours later Sir R. Campbell telegraphed that according to M. Baudouin, the German terms had not arrived. Sir R. Campbell was insisting that we should be consulted before any terms were accepted, but he was afraid that—having already broken their agreement with us—the French Ministers might not hesitate before a second violation. He reported to the Foreign Office

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Campbell was also instructed to say that the agreement not to conclude a separate armistice or peace had been made, not on behalf of any particular French Government, but on behalf of the French Republic.

that in all his conversations he had spoken in the terms of telegrams 368 and 369; the only answer given to him was that the French fleet would not be surrendered to Germany. Shortly before midnight he telegraphed that, in order to be absolutely certain that no member of the French Government was left in any doubt about the British attitude, he had asked the Secretary-General to bring, formally and in writing, the contents of telegrams 368 and 369 before the notice of the Council of Ministers. The Secretary-General had promised to do this.

During the night of June 17-18 the Foreign Office once more invited the French Government to come to Great Britain. The Prime Minister sent a personal message to Marshal Pétain and General Weygand about the fleet.<sup>1</sup> General Weygand received the message badly, but Marshal Pétain assured Sir R. Campbell that he need have no misgivings over the question of the fleet. Sir R. Campbell himself reported on the morning of June 18 that he expected the Council of Ministers to take a 'satisfactory decision' about the fleet. M. Baudouin told him that the decision had been taken, and had only to be confirmed by the Council. The Council, however, changed the decision. They considered that, as a point of honour, France should receive the German terms while her fleet and army were still fighting.<sup>2</sup> If the terms involved the surrender of the fleet, they would be rejected, and the fleet would sail to British ports or be scuttled.

Meanwhile Mr. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Admiral Sir D. Pound, had gone to Bordeaux to see Admiral Darlan. Lord Lloyd followed them on June 19.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Alexander and Admiral Pound sent an optimistic report on the night of June 18-19. They were impressed with Admiral Darlan's sincerity and determination not to surrender the fleet. Sir R. Campbell, however, was less hopeful. He reported early on June 19 that the French Ministers were 'very indignant' at a message communicated to them on June 18 by the United States Ambassador that they would lose American friendship and goodwill if they did not put their fleet in a place of safety before negotiating an armistice. The Ministers considered this message an 'intolerable interference' on the part of a neutral country, and

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 191.

<sup>2</sup> Neither Sir R. Campbell nor any other British representative in contact with the French seems to have made the point—to which, indeed, the French would not have listened—that the fleet would not have ceased to 'fight' if it had been withdrawn from French ports, and that once it was outside these ports, the Germans—not having command of the sea—could not have prevented it from continuing to fight.

<sup>3</sup> M. Corbin and M. Monnet, at this time a member of the Anglo-French Co-ordination Committee in London, had recommended that another Cabinet Minister should fly to Bordeaux. Lord Lloyd was chosen because as Secretary of State for the Colonies he was concerned directly with questions affecting the continuance of French resistance overseas. He also had many contacts with France, and had been an outstanding supporter of the Anglo-French *entente* and of resistance to Germany.

especially a country which had 'failed to come up to their expectations.'<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Campbell reported that the Ministers talked of refusing dishonourable terms, and of leaving France when the army had to capitulate, but they evaded every question put to them on the subject. Later in the afternoon of June 19 Sir R. Campbell telegraphed that he had been told by M. Baudouin that the Council of Ministers had decided that, on the approach of the Germans to Bordeaux, the President of the Republic, and the Presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies would go overseas, probably to Algiers, in order to carry on the government. General Weygand was also likely to go to North Africa.

Lord Lloyd brought with him to Bordeaux a message from the British Government undertaking to put transport at the disposal of the French for evacuation to North Africa. Lord Lloyd, with Sir R. Campbell and Mr. Alexander, saw Marshal Pétain and M. Baudouin. The French Ministers gave more assurances about the fleet, but were indefinite about the move of the Government from Bordeaux. M. Baudouin said that the question had been decided in principle, and would be settled finally on June 20. When he was reminded that he had said earlier in the day that the matter had been settled, he answered again that the principle had been accepted, and that he hoped that the party leaving France might go early in the afternoon of June 20. During the night of June 19-20 the Germans bombed Bordeaux; the bombardment was not heavy, but the French Government decided to move to Perpignan. They expected their representatives to receive the German terms at Tours on the night of June 20-21. Sir R. Campbell was told that, after the meeting of the Council of Ministers at Perpignan, M. Lebrun, with MM Jeanneney and Herriot and more Ministers than had previously been contemplated, would leave Port Vendres for North Africa.

During the night of June 20-21 Sir R. Campbell reported another change of plan. The Germans had offered to reinstate the telephone line between Tours and Bordeaux and the Ministers had decided to receive the armistice terms at Bordeaux. On the morning of June 21 Sir R. Campbell sent a more detailed account. He had reminded the French Ministers in writing that we expected to be consulted about the terms; he proposed to repeat that the establishment of the French Government overseas would alone 'encourage the British Government to stand by France to the end.' He had impressed the point bluntly many times on Marshal Pétain, but the Marshal seemed unable to grasp its significance and thought only of staying in France to do what he could to mitigate the suffering of the French people

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lothian had been instructed on the night of June 17-18 to ask President Roosevelt whether he would telegraph in strong terms to Marshal Pétain about the fleet. The President agreed to do so, and also said that he would send a private message to Admiral Darlan urging him to put the fleet at once under British control.



under German occupation. In reply to Sir R. Campbell's communication, M. Baudouin sent him a note that it had not been thought necessary to inform him that the Council of Ministers intended to have an exchange of views with the British Government as soon as they knew the armistice terms. Sir R. Campbell reported later that, after the decision to move to Perpignan had been cancelled, M. Herriot had arranged for a ship at Bordeaux to take off a number of deputies. This ship was now waiting at the mouth of the Garonne. Unfortunately the deputies on board were those who stood for resistance, while their weaker colleagues were still in Bordeaux.<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Campbell was afraid that the next step might be to give up the idea of sending the President and a nucleus of the Government abroad. M. Baudouin told Sir R. Campbell at 4 p.m. that the French decision was unchanged, but Sir R. Campbell reported that, even if these assurances were true at the moment, 'evil influences' were at work.

The French Government received the German terms about midnight on June 21-22. Article 8 of these terms laid down that the French fleet, except ships left free for the safeguard of French interests in the colonial empire, was to be collected in certain ports to be specified, and there disarmed and demobilised under German and Italian control. The Germans declared that they had no intention of using the fleet for their own purposes.

On hearing that the French had received the German terms, and that M. Baudouin would see him after the meeting of the Council—which was about to take place—Sir R. Campbell went to the Council. M. Charles-Roux gave him a broad outline of the terms. Sir R. Campbell at once wrote a note calling attention to the insidious character of the conditions about the fleet and to the folly of trusting German promises. He asked that this note should be taken into the Council. After the meeting M. Baudouin came up to Sir R. Campbell and said that he was going away to draft a reply in accordance with the decision of the Council. Sir R. Campbell answered that he, and the Canadian and South African Ministers who had now joined him, must be received, and that they must be told of the German terms and the French reply. M. Baudouin answered, somewhat rudely,

<sup>1</sup> This ship—the *Massilia*—sailed in the afternoon of June 21 and reached Casablanca on June 24. Among the passengers were MM Daladier, Mandel and Campinchi. M. Mandel tried without success to proclaim a 'resistance administration' in North Africa. On July 1 the Prime Minister gave orders to the Admiralty that an attempt should be made, if possible, to take the passengers off the *Massilia*, but these orders could not be carried out, since for three weeks the ship remained under the shelter of the shore batteries of Casablanca. At one point in his conversation with Sir R. Campbell Marshal Pétain said that, if the British torpedoed a ship taking the French Government overseas, he would have no regrets.



that the French were suggesting that the fleet should be sent to ports in North Africa. Sir R. Campbell said that the fleet might then fall into Italian hands. M. Baudouin answered that, if there were any danger, the ships would be scuttled in accordance with the decision already taken. He then moved away. Sir R. Campbell protested formally against the way he and his colleagues were being treated, and insisted that they should be received somewhere where they could talk quietly. M. Baudouin led them, with bad grace, into the Council room. Here they found M. Lebrun. Sir R. Campbell renewed his protest, and M. Lebrun made some irrelevant remark. Sir R. Campbell reminded M. Baudouin of the notes exchanged between them, and requested at least that he should be given a copy of the German terms. M. Baudouin said at first that he had no spare copy. He produced one only after Sir R. Campbell's continued insistence.

Sir R. Campbell saw M. Baudouin again, and also Marshal Pétain, about 7.45 a.m., just before the meeting of the Council to consider the draft French reply. He protested once more about the fleet. Marshal Pétain said the French Government hoped to get it away to African ports, e.g. Dakar or Madagascar.<sup>1</sup> The fleet would be scuttled if it were in danger of falling into enemy hands. This interview took place while the Ministers, who were standing round, were waiting to go into the Council. Marshal Pétain said that he could not keep them waiting longer. After the meeting of the Council, Sir R. Campbell obtained, with the utmost difficulty, a copy of the French reply. The reply suggested the use of French African ports for the internment of the fleet. After he had seen the text Sir R. Campbell again asked to be received at once by M. Baudouin. He said that the French proposals would lead to a breach of faith on the part of France. M. Baudouin argued that the scuttling order was the key to the situation.

At 6 p.m. M. Charles-Roux told Sir R. Campbell that he had been instructed to let him know secretly that Admiral Darlan's dispositions were such that no ship would be utilisable if the Germans attempted to use them. M. Charles-Roux argued that the French decisions gave Great Britain complete satisfaction. Sir R. Campbell strongly contested this statement, and, at the end of the interview, said that he intended to leave as soon as the armistice was signed. He had been accredited to a free and Allied Government, and could not stay with a French Government which within a few hours might be under enemy control; it would be futile to suppose that in the circumstances the Germans would allow him to communicate with the French Government. Later in the evening Sir R. Campbell repeated his views to General Weygand, who told him that the

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<sup>1</sup> Admiral Auphan, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, also mentioned to the British naval attaché the Congo as a possible place.

armistice had been signed.<sup>1</sup> General Weygand, like M. Charles-Roux at first seemed surprised at Sir R. Campbell's decision to leave France, but realised the force of his argument. M. Baudouin also accepted the decision on hearing the reasons for it. Sir R. Campbell did not see Marshal Pétain or M. Lebrun, since both were in bed.

The action taken in London during the morning and afternoon of June 22 was affected by the time-lag in the arrival of information from Bordeaux. At a morning meeting the War Cabinet did not know the German conditions about the fleet. They approved the text of an appeal to be made to the French, but the text did not reach Sir R. Campbell until after the signature of the armistice. The War Cabinet met again in the evening of June 22. They now knew the German terms. They agreed that the Prime Minister should broadcast a statement describing the character of the conditions imposed by the Germans, and making it clear that the French Government at Bordeaux had been deprived of all real liberty.

(v)

*British hopes of the continuation of resistance on French overseas territories: General de Gaulle's appeal to Frenchmen: British recognition of General de Gaulle as leader of a Free French Movement.*

The Prime Minister's statement of June 23 concluded with an appeal to all Frenchmen outside the power of the enemy to assist the 'forces of liberation.' The British Government still had some hope that, in spite of the refusal of Marshal Pétain's Government to continue the war from French overseas territory, the military and civil authorities in the French colonial empire might withhold obedience from the home government and maintain resistance, and that large numbers of French officers and men in metropolitan France would wish to go on fighting at the side of the British forces. Neither hope was entirely fulfilled or entirely disappointed.

The movement for resistance on French colonial territory had been encouraged by British appeals before the armistice; the establishment of a force of 'Free Frenchmen' was the work of General de Gaulle.<sup>2</sup> On June 17 the Foreign Office, in view of Marshal Pétain's

<sup>1</sup> The armistice was signed at 6.46 p.m. German summer time. The French did not secure their condition that the fleet should be interned in African ports.

<sup>2</sup> General de Gaulle had been appointed Under-Secretary of State for National Defence by M. Reynaud. He had come to London in connection with plans for continuing the war in North Africa, and had made a good impression on the Prime Minister. He went back to France on June 16 (see above, p. 67), but on June 17 left again for London.

broadcast,<sup>1</sup> instructed British consular representatives in French colonial territory to make a communication to the French authorities to the effect that the French Government had been compelled to capitulate, but that the British Government and people would do their utmost to defend French colonial territories against the enemy, and hoped for French cooperation. The response of the French colonial authorities was uncertain, and Marshal Pétain's Government protested to Sir R. Campbell about the appeal. On June 22, when it was clear that this Government intended to accept the German terms, the Secretary of State sent further instructions to the British consular representatives to make another appeal as soon as the armistice had been signed. The French now protested even more strongly, but the War Cabinet decided to make no reply.

Meanwhile, on June 18, General de Gaulle broadcast from London a message to the French nation appealing to all Frenchmen in or coming to Great Britain to get into touch with him in order to maintain French resistance. The War Cabinet were at first opposed to this broadcast, not on account of its contents, but because General de Gaulle, as a strong opponent of the policy of surrender, was known to be disliked by Marshal Pétain and his colleagues. It seemed therefore undesirable that he should broadcast as long as it was still possible that the French Government would not take action contrary to the terms of the Anglo-French alliance. The British Government had not invited General de Gaulle to return to London, and had no plans for asking him to undertake any political activities. Later, however, on June 18 the members of the War Cabinet were consulted individually about the broadcast and agreed to it. On the following day General de Gaulle and other Frenchmen in London thought it desirable to go a step further and to say that an independent French Government had been formed in London. The Foreign Office thought that we should be 'careful not to ride two horses at the same time.' General de Gaulle's broadcast of June 18 had appeared to challenge the government at Bordeaux, and the French Ministers had already taken offence at our communication to the French colonial authorities and at President Roosevelt's message about the French navy. In view of the reports that General Weygand and other Ministers might go to North Africa to organise French resistance, it would be a mistake to allow General de Gaulle to issue from Great Britain an appeal to Frenchmen to rally under him.

General de Gaulle was therefore asked for the present not to broadcast any statement. On June 20 General Spears sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister suggesting as a matter of the utmost urgency

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 69. The Chiefs of Staff had recommended on June 14 that we should offer to do everything possible to help the French in overseas territories to defend themselves.

that General de Gaulle should broadcast on the night of June 20-21. In the afternoon of June 20 General de Gaulle came to the Foreign Office, where a French broadcast statement disowning him had already been heard at midday. Sir A. Cadogan told General de Gaulle of the possibility that General Weygand might go to Africa. Hence it might be better for General de Gaulle to say nothing until the situation become clearer. General de Gaulle said that if General Weygand were shewn to be organising resistance in French overseas territory, he would at once offer his own services to him.

General de Gaulle did not broadcast on June 20-21, but in view of the situation on the evening of June 22, there no longer seemed any reason for holding back. General de Gaulle would speak as a distinguished French officer, and not as a mouthpiece of the British Government. General de Gaulle therefore made a statement at 10 p.m. on this night. Next morning the War Cabinet considered a proposal from the General that he should set up a French National Committee in London. He asked that the British Government should recognise his Committee. The War Cabinet agreed in principle to do so. General de Gaulle broadcast his plan on June 23. He explained that, since the political institutions of France could not function freely, he intended to form a committee which would account for its acts either to the legal and established French Government, as soon as such a government again existed, or to the representatives of the French people as soon as circumstances allowed them to assemble in suitable conditions. After this broadcast a statement was made in French that the British Government was unable to recognise the Bordeaux Government as that of an independent country and took note of the formation of a Provisional French National Committee. They would recognise and deal with such a Committee on all matters concerning the prosecution of the war as long as it continued to represent all French elements resolved to fight the common enemy.

General de Gaulle's optimism about the reception of his proposals by Frenchmen were not borne out by the attitude of M. Corbin. M. Corbin, who had also consulted M. Léger, told Lord Halifax that we were making a wrong approach to the question of continuing French resistance. Frenchmen who might feel the armistice to be shameful would nevertheless resent any statement by the British Government about breaking off relations with the Bordeaux Government, and would ask how we expected them to condemn their own Government and to go on with resistance which was already impossible. M. Reynaud and M. Herriot also sent messages to the Prime Minister. M. Reynaud tried to argue that we were in fact safeguarded against the risk of an attempt by the enemy to get

possession of the French fleet. M. Herriot said that he and others favourable to us intended to stay in France, where they could do more good than by leaving for one of the colonies.

The reports received on June 24 and 25 shewed a decline in the will to resistance throughout the French colonies. It appeared unlikely that, with the exception of Indo-China, any of the large colonies would disavow Marshal Pétain's Government. At the same time there was more evidence of the completeness with which this Government had broken with Great Britain. The Foreign Office received a copy of a statement in which the French presented their case to the United States Government. In this statement Marshal Pétain's Government alleged the failure of Great Britain to mobilise her man-power and to send to France the divisions which she had promised. A French delegation had visited England and reported on the unsatisfactory state of war production. The British obviously believed more in the blockade than in the provision of material assistance to France. The Prime Minister, on his last visit to France, had been expected to attend a Council of Ministers but had failed to do so. The British Government had said that they intended to go on fighting but would not reproach the French if they felt obliged to sue for peace. Later, owing to the intervention of M. Mandel and others, the British Government had taken a different attitude.

On June 28 the British Government finally decided to announce their official recognition of General de Gaulle as 'the leader of all Free Frenchmen, wherever they may be, who rally to him in support of the Allied cause.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General de Gaulle was thus not recognised as the head of an independent government.

## CHAPTER IV

### Anglo-American relations from the opening of the German offensive in the West to the end of 1940

#### (i)

*Correspondence between Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt at the time of the collapse of France: American concern with regard to the future of the British fleet (May-June, 1940).*

IN the opening phase of the German offensive American opinion was more concerned with the possible repercussions of British action to protect the oil refineries in the Dutch West Indian islands than with the ominous facts of the German advance. As the full extent of the French catastrophe was realised, a section of American opinion assumed that Great Britain also was lost, and could be 'written off.' The United States Government were bound to face this possibility. They were very much less prepared for war than the Allies had been, and if they could not count on Great Britain remaining undefeated, they might be unwise to risk sending material which would either be lost *en route* or fall into German hands after a British surrender.

The situation was, for Americans, the more bewildering because they had not realised the extent to which they had been living under the protection of the British fleet and the French army. They still did not draw the obvious conclusion from these facts. There was, as Mr. Roosevelt pointed out, no question at this stage of the entry of the United States into the war. Apart from the military unpreparedness of the country, and the risk that Japan might attack in the Pacific if the American fleet were concentrated in the Atlantic, domestic political considerations made a decision to go to war impracticable. The presidential election was approaching, and a party which advocated American belligerency would be heavily defeated. In retrospect one may regard Mr. Roosevelt's decision—announced in a speech of June 10, 1940, after Italy had entered the war—to continue assistance to Great Britain as all that he could have done. He added a second assurance that production would be increased in the United States. Even these promises, however, could not be fulfilled immediately on any large scale.

In a message of May 15 Mr. Churchill had warned the President that the influence of the United States might count for little unless it were exerted at once. Mr. Churchill did not ask as yet for more

than a proclamation of non-belligerency ('which would mean that you would help us with everything short of actually engaging armed forces'). In view of the likelihood of Italian entry into the war he enquired whether the United States could lend Great Britain forty or fifty of their older destroyers. The President replied that he could not lend the destroyers without the authorisation of Congress; he doubted whether at the moment it would be wise to ask for it. The Prime Minister repeated his warning to the President on May 18. Meanwhile Mr. Roosevelt had a talk with Lord Lothian in which he said that, at the worst, the British fleet might cross the Atlantic to Canada or the United States. Lord Lothian said that such a move would depend on the entry of the United States into the war. The Prime Minister, after reading Lord Lothian's account of this conversation, thought it desirable to speak plainly to Mr. Roosevelt. In a message of May 20 he said that the present Administration would never surrender, but if the country were defeated 'and others came in to parley amid the ruins . . . the sole remaining bargaining counter with Germany would be the fleet, and, if this country was left by the United States to its fate, no one would have the right to blame those then responsible if they made the best terms they could for the surviving inhabitants.'<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister's words did not remove what Lord Lothian called Mr. Roosevelt's 'paralysing illusion.' Mr. Roosevelt said to Lord Lothian on May 26 that, if things came to the worst, the British fleet, and as many partly finished ships as possible, might be treated not as British, but as Empire possessions, and transferred to Canada or Australia before they could be captured or surrendered. The British, French, Dutch, and Belgian overseas empires constituted very formidable resources for prosecuting the war. If the navy were surrendered, the whole edifice would collapse, whatever promises Hitler might make. Lord Lothian said again that the British decision would depend on America being in the war with us. Mr. Roosevelt thought it probable that Germany would challenge some vital American interest in the near future, and that the United States would then enter the war with the necessary popular support. It is evidence of the extreme gravity with which the President viewed the situation that he suggested to Lord Lothian that, if His Majesty the King had to leave Great Britain, and if the Imperial as distinct from the Home Departments of His Majesty's Government had to be moved out of the country, it might be better to establish a temporary capital at Bermuda, and not in Canada. The Canadians might find difficulties about the transfer of Downing Street to Toronto, and American Republicans might be 'restless at monarchy being based on the American continent.'

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the message, see Churchill, II, 50-51.



After the evacuation of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk, the situation changed. The chances of successful British resistance were greater—though the total military collapse of France could be seen more clearly—while the need of American help in material of war was even more urgent. On May 31 Lord Halifax asked Mr. Kennedy whether there was any possibility of obtaining the destroyers for which the Prime Minister had appealed. The War Cabinet indeed had considered on May 27 sending a special mission to the United States to supplement the efforts which were being made through diplomatic channels to secure the release of the destroyers and other material. The Foreign Office thought this plan undesirable, since the arrival of a new mission would be given wide publicity and might be taken as a sign of panic and as a despairing effort by the Allies to involve the United States in the war.

Lord Lothian was a little concerned that the Prime Minister's speech of June 4 in the House of Commons<sup>1</sup> might be interpreted as supporting the view that the United States could count on getting the British fleet even if Great Britain were defeated. The Prime Minister explained to Lord Lothian on June 9 that his speech was intended primarily for Germany and Italy, and for the Dominions, for whom we were trustees, but that he had always kept in mind the point about the fleet. Mr. Churchill asked Lord Lothian to discourage any 'complacent assumption' on the part of the United States that they would be able to 'pick up the debris of the British fleet by their present policy. On the contrary they run the terrible risk that their sea-power will be completely over-matched.' If Great Britain were defeated, a pro-German Government might be set up, and surrender the fleet in order to obtain better terms from Hitler. Germany and Japan would then be masters of the New World.<sup>2</sup> In his message of June 15 to the President<sup>3</sup> Mr. Churchill repeated this argument about a possible 'revolution in sea-power' in the event of a German victory. He also asked again (he had already repeated his request on June 11) for thirty-five old United States destroyers.

At the end of his conversation with the President on June 15<sup>4</sup> about M. Reynaud's final appeal, Lord Lothian had said that, while the case of France was most urgent, that of Great Britain might soon be analogous. Great Britain would fight desperately, but the ultimate decision about peace, and the destiny of the British fleet, like that of France, might depend on the action of the United States. Lord

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., the Prime Minister's statement of confidence that even if Great Britain 'were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British fleet, would carry on the struggle. . . .'

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 355.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 65.

Lothian asked what were 'the chances of the United States being at war with Hitler before these final and critical decisions had to be made?' The President said that no one could answer the question, since the answer depended on the movement of American opinion, and even more 'on whether before that time the Dictators had taken some action which compelled the United States to go to war in self-defence.' The President implied that 'he believed this latter would be the case as far as Great Britain was concerned, but again the answer could be only conjectural.' Lord Lothian then explained again that, if Great Britain were overrun, and the United States were not in the war, and if Hitler 'threatened torture' unless the British fleet were surrendered, the fleet would sink itself either at sea or in a hopeless attack on Germany.

Nonetheless the President, after hearing of the resignation of M. Reynaud, repeated his hope that if a crisis similar to that of France ever arose in Great Britain, the war would be carried on overseas, and the British fleet would not be given up. Once more Lord Lothian pointed out that Great Britain could not be expected to send her fleet to any country not intending to use it—and the country's own resources—in order to rescue Great Britain from conquest. Mr. Roosevelt suggested that the British fleet might go to Cape-town, Singapore, Aden, and Sydney, while the main American navy might undertake the defence of Canada and other British possessions.

One June 18 Lord Lothian was sent a full statement of the views of the British Government on the situation brought about by the French collapse, and on the future prospects of the war.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Lord Lothian had suggested to the President that staff talks might be held to consider how the British and American fleets, and, if necessary, air forces should deal with the various situations which might arise in the near future. The President agreed with this suggestion; the Prime Minister was doubtful about it, because he was afraid that the Americans might bring the discussions round to the question of the transfer of the British fleet to transatlantic bases if Great Britain were overrun, and that any discussion of this possibility would weaken confidence at home. The Prime Minister also told Mr. Mackenzie King, in reply to a question from the latter about the possibility of a transfer of the fleet, that he saw no reason to make any preparations for such an event. He would never enter into any peace negotiations, but a future Government might do so if we were deserted by the United States, and defeated in Great Britain. The Prime Minister asked Mr. Mackenzie King to impress this danger upon the President.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This statement followed the text of a memorandum drawn up on June 13 by the Chiefs of Staff and approved with minor alterations by the War Cabinet on June 14. For a summary of the text, see *Grand Strategy*, II, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this telegram, see Churchill, II, 200.

Lord Lothian reported on the night of June 24-5 that Mr. Hull was inclined to think that owing to the risks of leakage in the press, it would be better to hold discussions through diplomatic rather than service channels. The Prime Minister still hesitated, but the Foreign Office submitted that, although the Americans might insist on discussing the question of a possible transfer of the fleet, we ought to accept the suggestion for staff talks, since otherwise we might have no chance of securing them. Mr. Hull was already raising doubts about them, and the attitude of Japan<sup>1</sup> made it desirable at least to discuss the Pacific. The Prime Minister accepted these arguments, and Lord Lothian was instructed to propose that the talks should be held in London.<sup>2</sup>

(ii)

*The British offer of bases, and the transfer of American destroyers: the President's proposals for assistance to Great Britain (May-December, 1940)*<sup>3</sup>

Lord Lothian had suggested, on the night of May 24-25, that the British Government should consider making a formal offer to allow the United States to construct aerodromes and naval stations on British islands of strategic importance to American security. The War Cabinet discussed this proposal on May 27 and 29. They decided that it would be undesirable to make such an offer unless we were assured of substantial advantages from it. The Isolationists

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> An American mission came to London in mid-August for the purpose of exploratory talks. Mr. Roosevelt, in view of the forthcoming presidential election, was also most anxious that there should be no publicity about the discussions.

<sup>3</sup> The Anglo-American financial discussions arising out of the problem of the exhaustion of British gold and dollar reserves and resulting in the Lend-Lease Act of March 11, 1941, fall outside the scope of this History. The Foreign Office and the British Embassy in Washington acted as channels of communication throughout these discussions (see above, Introduction, p. xxii), but the conduct of the negotiations was, for obvious reasons, in the hands of representatives of the Treasury. The subject is treated by Sir W. K. Hancock and M. M. Gowing, *op. cit.*, and (more fully) in R. A. Sayers, *Finance, 1939-1945* (History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series). A third volume in this series—H. Duncan Hall, *North American Supply*—deals with the organisations set up on the British side for the placing of orders and with other problems connected with the provision of supplies from the United States.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the evolution of American policy towards belligerency cannot be fully understood without detailed reference to these questions of finance, war production, and shipping, e.g. the decision to provide Great Britain with the material necessary for fighting the war raised the further question how to secure the safe arrival of this material in British or British-controlled ports. This question in turn necessarily became involved in the American problem of 'hemisphere defence.' Thus it is significant that the first American naval action against Germany took place in April, 1941, when a United States warship engaged in reconnaissance duties in Icelandic waters dropped depth charges in the neighbourhood of a German submarine.

<sup>1</sup> might misrepresent the offer as an attempt to involve the United States in the war, or as a sign that we were in despair. Lord Lothian did not mention the question again until June 22. He then reported that he did not wish to press his proposal against the opinion of the War Cabinet, but that he knew the requirements of the United States army and air forces for national defence. Eleven days later Lord Lothian repeated his suggestion. He reported that there was a popular demand in favour of taking over all the Caribbean islands in the interest of American defence. The best answer to such a demand would be an offer of bases. An interim reply was sent to Lord Lothian on July 6 that an offer of this kind should be discussed only in connexion with the wider issue of general Anglo-American strategic cooperation, and that fuller instructions would follow as soon as possible. On July 8 and 10 Lord Lothian sent more messages on the subject. He said that Mr. Hull was afraid that the United States representatives at the Pan-American conference to be held at Havana on July 20 might want the Caribbean islands to be placed under American control for purposes of defence. Colonel Knox, Secretary of the Navy, had asked Lord Lothian whether it would be possible to arrange for the transfer of the British islands in return for the cancellation of the British war debt to the United States. Lord Lothian had answered that opinion in the United States and in Great Britain took very different views of the war debt, and that the defence problem could not be handled in this way.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office and Chiefs of Staff were strongly in favour of Lord Lothian's proposal. The main argument for it was our immediate need of American help, but it could also be said that the future of our Empire depended upon an enduring Anglo-American cooperation. This fact might be obvious to us; to American opinion it was new and startling. Hence we should do everything we could to try to assist the United States in taking up 'new and heavy responsibility for which so little in her tradition and history has prepared her.' On our side we should recognise that a responsibility involved a right to the means to discharge it. Until late in the last war we had been almost alone for a century in guarding the English-speaking peoples by sea, and the British Empire rather than the United States was still in possession of the naval and air facilities protecting the American continent. The Foreign Office thought that we should make a free offer of the bases. A bargain would be open to the

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Lothian explained that the United States Government had not availed themselves of the leasehold rights granted to them in 1939 at Trinidad, Bermuda and St. Lucia (see above, p. 39) partly because Mr. Roosevelt had not wanted to do anything which the Isolationists might describe as entangling the United States in the European war. The attitude of public opinion had now changed. The Administration also wanted to be able to intervene in South America in the event of German 'fifth column' or other activities there.

difficulty that we were already in debt to the United States owing to the last war, and would be more so after the present war. The United States were being generous to us, since, if they wished, they could break our blockade.<sup>1</sup>

The War Cabinet decided on July 29 to make a proposal on the lines suggested by Lord Lothian. At the same time the Prime Minister was considering another appeal to Mr. Roosevelt to let us have the destroyers for which we had been asking since May 15. The Prime Minister sent this appeal on July 31,<sup>2</sup> while the War Cabinet was still discussing the conditions of our proposed offer of bases. Lord Lothian telegraphed on the night of August 1-2 that Mr. Roosevelt's advisers wanted to sell us 50-60 destroyers, but that legislation was necessary for their transfer. The Isolationists of both parties would oppose the legislation, and bring the subject into the election campaign. Efforts had been made to persuade Mr. Willkie to agree not to oppose the plan; Mr. Willkie would not commit himself, but was said not to be unfriendly to it. Lord Lothian explained that there were two ways out of the difficulty: (i) The United States might sell the destroyers to Canada, and, in return for sending them to European waters, the Canadian Government might be given a lien on some of the larger British cruisers which, in the event of our defeat, would become part of the Canadian contribution to the defence of North America; or (ii) the destroyers might be sold in exchange for defence bases. Colonel Knox thought that Congress would accept only the second alternative.

Lord Lothian was told at once that we had decided to meet the American requirements. On August 3 he was instructed that we would accept the second alternative, though we should prefer an indefinite lease to a sale of territory. The question of bases, however, was not wholly within the competence of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and we should have to consult the Dominion and Colonial Governments concerned. Lord Lothian telegraphed on the night of August 3-4 that Mr. Roosevelt thought it impossible to get the assent of Congress to the required legislation<sup>3</sup> unless, among other things, he had a public assurance that, if necessary, the British fleet would leave British waters and continue to fight overseas for the British Empire. Lord Lothian reported later that Mr. Hull and Mr. Welles agreed with the President. Mr. Hull thought that even so the chances against the passing of the bill were four to one.

<sup>1</sup> At the end of July, 1940, Great Britain introduced new and more stringent methods of economic warfare based on 'control at source', and making the use of navicerts compulsory. Without American acquiescence and informal co-operation the new policy could not have been employed with effect. See Medicott, I, ch. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 356-7.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Roosevelt was afraid of 'filibustering' by fifteen or twenty determined Isolationists in the Senate.

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister was willing to make a declaration about the fleet only if it were clearly understood that the British Government must be the sole judge when, if ever, the moment had come for the fleet to leave Great Britain. He thought that nothing less than a war alliance with the United States would justify any stipulation in the matter.<sup>1</sup> Lord Lothian was instructed on August 8 that there was great difficulty in giving even the simplest assurance desired by the President. He was asked whether he could suggest any way round the difficulty. At the same time he was instructed to inform the President that he could say to Congress that, as soon as we received the destroyers, we would provide the facilities with regard to naval and air bases.

On August 14 the President sent a message to the Prime Minister that he thought it would be possible to provide at least fifty destroyers as well as other material. The United States would want to buy, or to receive on a 99-year lease, certain bases, and the President would require, not a public statement, but a personal assurance about the fleet, e.g. a repetition of the Prime Minister's statement in his speech on June 4.

The Prime Minister considered that, if this proposal went through, the United States would have taken a long step towards coming into the war on our side. The sale of destroyers to a belligerent Power was not a neutral action. The destroyers would be of very great value, and the fact of their sale would have an immense effect on Germany. On the other hand the crucial point was what Mr. Roosevelt might say publicly about the fleet. With the approval of the War Cabinet therefore the Prime Minister replied on August 15 to the President that he was willing to repeat what he had said on June 4, but that the President should remember, if he used the statement, 'the disastrous effect . . . of allowing any impression to grow that we regard the conquest of the British Isles and its naval bases as any other than an impossible contingency.'<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons on August 20 mentioning the British offer of bases<sup>3</sup> and referring to his speech of June 4 with regard to the fleet. Meanwhile the President had told Mr. Mackenzie King that he hoped that he would not need special legislation from Congress, and Lord Lothian had reported that Mr. Welles suggested an exchange of letters between himself (Lord Lothian) and Mr. Hull. Mr. Welles said that this method was necessary because the President could send the destroyers without

<sup>1</sup> For the text of a note on the subject to Lord Halifax, and a telegram to Lord Lothian from the Prime Minister on August 7, see Churchill, II, 358-60.

<sup>2</sup> For the full text of this message, see Churchill, II, 360-1.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons on August 20, see Parl. Deb., H. of C., 5th ser., vol. 364, cols., 1170-1.



legislation only in exchange for a definite consideration and on condition that the Chief of Naval Staff would certify that they were not essential to the national defence of the United States.

Lord Lothian had suggested modifications in the draft letters prepared by Mr. Welles, but, from the British point of view, these proposals introduced a new feature. Hitherto the War Cabinet had not realised that Mr. Roosevelt intended to establish any open connexion between the British grant of bases and the American transfer of destroyers. The Americans were now suggesting a formal bargain. The War Cabinet considered this plan out of the question. No monetary relationships could be established between the benefits to be conferred by either side. We were offering facilities worth far more than fifty old destroyers and other war material of which the chief value to us lay in our urgent need of it. Public opinion would ask why we did not obtain something more important, such as the cancellation of our war debt to the United States. The War Cabinet therefore agreed with the Prime Minister that we should make it plain that we would provide without payment the facilities wanted by the United States. If the United States wished to link this transaction with the transfer of the destroyers they could do so; we could not ourselves make such a link.

The Prime Minister replied in these terms to Mr. Roosevelt on August 22,<sup>1</sup> but Mr. Welles told Lord Lothian, after Mr. Roosevelt had received the message, that it was impossible to avoid bringing the two transactions together. The naval authorities could not say, under existing legislation, that the destroyers were not essential to the defence of the United States. Hence the transfer could not be made legally except in return for a definite consideration which could be certified as adding to the security of the United States. Mr. Welles said that the President was much concerned over the matter, and that, unless he acted quickly, Isolationists—and others—would have a chance to undermine the position.

Lord Lothian considered that Mr. Welles' view was in accordance with the facts. Everyone in the United States realised that the two transactions were connected. The Prime Minister's speech had shown that we had long been considering the question of an offer of naval and air bases, and the exchange of letters could be regarded more or less as a legal appendage. The important considerations were that we and the United States were now beginning to organise the joint defence of North America, and that the United States was helping in the defence of Great Britain by the transfer of destroyers, although such a transfer was an act of war. Lord Lothian telephoned to Sir A. Cadogan in the afternoon of August 23 that he saw no alternative to Mr. Roosevelt's proposed method of procedure. If we did not adopt

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's reply, see Churchill, II, 362-3.



this procedure, or even if we delayed our acceptance of it, we should probably lose the destroyers. Sir A. Cadogan therefore went to see the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was still afraid of the difficulties. He sent a message on August 25 to the President explaining why he hesitated about agreeing to the procedure.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Lothian, after further discussion with the President and Mr. Hull, sent to London drafts of two letters which he might write to Mr. Hull. The first letter included the President's requirements, i.e. an 'outline' enumeration of the 'facilities' which we were offering; the second was a confirmation of the Prime Minister's statements of June 4 and of August 20 with regard to the fleet. Lord Lothian said that the drafts still did not meet the difficulty that the President could not dispose of Government property, i.e., the destroyers, without some consideration in return. This difficulty concerned the United States Government, and the President would probably have to relate in some way the two transactions.

The Prime Minister sent a message to the President on August 27 accepting in general outline the American requirements.<sup>2</sup> He agreed with the terms of the two draft letters, but did not wish the second letter to be published because he thought it 'more likely that the German Government would be the one to surrender or scuttle its Fleet.' He added that if, after our offer, the President felt able to let us have 'the instrumentalities which have been mentioned, or anything else' which the President thought proper, 'this could be expressed as an act not in payment or consideration for, but in recognition of, what we had done for the United States.'

During the night of August 27-8 Lord Lothian telegraphed a new draft of a letter to Mr. Hull, and again said that there must be an agreement for an exchange. The generosity of the Prime Minister's public offer of August 20 had complicated the position, since we had now offered the facilities as a free gift, and the President had no power to make a free gift of the destroyers. The proposal embodied in the new draft was that part of the facilities should be regarded as a free gift and the balance as an exchange. Mr. Roosevelt had also suggested that the question of the future of the British fleet should be dealt with apart from the exchange of letters. Mr. Roosevelt would send the Prime Minister a telegram assuming that the declarations of June 4 and August 20 were valid, and the Prime Minister would answer 'yes.'

On August 28 Mr. Hull asked Lord Lothian to say how much he (Mr. Hull) regretted the constitutional difficulties. Mr. Roosevelt's decision to transfer the destroyers without asking for the approval of Congress meant that he and the Administration were risking their

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 363-5.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 365-6.

political existence. Even in the form of an exchange of letters, the transaction was of 'arguable legality.' The War Cabinet decided on August 29 to accept the American plan. Lord Lothian was instructed accordingly, and was told also to say that we understood the difficulties on the American side and greatly appreciated the efforts made by the Administration to meet our point of view. Lord Lothian telegraphed on the night of August 29-30 the terms in which the President proposed to make his enquiry about the fleet. On the following night the Prime Minister sent his proposed reply.<sup>1</sup>

The actual terms of agreement over the allocation of bases was settled only after long negotiations. These negotiations were not easy, partly owing to the large demands on the American side, and partly owing to the strength of local feeling in the areas concerned.<sup>2</sup> The detailed negotiations were not smoothed by the fact that, owing to their age and condition, the destroyers needed an unexpected amount of repair and were therefore of less use than had been hoped in the critical months before new British construction was available. Nine only of the ships were in service at the end of December, 1940.

After the great air battles of August and September American opinion underwent a further change. The Germans had planned an invasion of Great Britain and had failed to carry it out. If they had failed at a time of British weakness, their future chances of success were not too high. It was therefore possible to envisage a long war in which American material assistance might decide the issue. Henceforward the question, from the American point of view, was not whether it was a mistake to spend American resources in giving the assistance; the discussions now took American help for granted, and dealt with the ways and means whereby it could be provided.

The signs of American confidence, fortified by the Presidential election which had returned Mr. Roosevelt to office, were among the most hopeful results of six months of British endurance and action. There was indeed a reverse to the picture; although Americans were willing to send material in increasingly large quantities to Great Britain, their determination to keep out of the war seemed as firm as ever, and their belief that they could keep out of it was strengthened as the immediate threat to American security receded. On the British

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this reply, see Churchill, II, 367. On August 31 Lord Lothian reported that Mr. Hull thought it best to deal with the question of the fleet by an exchange of *aide-mémoires* between the British Embassy and the State Department. The Prime Minister accepted this plan. The notes were exchanged on September 2. On September 6, at the Prime Minister's suggestion, a message was sent to Lord Lothian on behalf of the War Cabinet approving the manner in which he had dealt with the whole matter of the destroyers.

<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office thought that there was some justification in the American complaint that the implementation of the agreement on the British side was too slow.

side it was necessary to consider whether the entry of the United States into the war would be of greater advantage, or whether we should get more supplies at a quicker rate if the United States remained out of the war. An American declaration of war might result in a diminution of the supply of munitions to Great Britain owing to American needs. On the other hand, if the United States were to declare war, the declaration would probably be against Japan, and American belligerent action at least for a time would be confined to the navy, and make little demand on the types of munitions which we hoped to obtain from American sources. Moreover, American industry was not likely to be put on a war footing while the United States remained neutral. Thus a declaration of war might bring about such an increase in American output that our own share would be larger. In any case American belligerency would have a great moral effect on our own people and on our enemies.

The general question of American assistance to Great Britain was considered with Lord Lothian during a visit which he paid to England from October 20 to November 11. The Foreign Office thought it desirable to give the President a full account of our position and needs (including the problem set to us by our inability to find any more dollars to pay for our American purchases). The Prime Minister had also discussed the whole matter with Lord Lothian. On November 27, therefore, at Lord Halifax's suggestion, the Prime Minister agreed to hasten the consideration of a letter which he had begun to draft.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill had never doubted that American belligerency would be of the greatest advantage to Great Britain, though after the collapse of France, he had taken care not to make any kind of appeal which might give the impression of an attempt to involve the United States in the war. He ended his long letter to the President with the words, 'If, as I believe, you are convinced, Mr. President, that the defeat of the Nazi and Fascist tyranny is a matter of high consequence to the people of the United States and to the Western Hemisphere, you will regard this letter, not as an appeal for aid, but as a statement of the minimum action necessary to achieve our common purpose.'

The letter reached Mr. Roosevelt while he was cruising on an American warship in the Caribbean. On December 17, the day after his return, he made an open reference to the idea of 'leasing' material to Great Britain. Mr. Roosevelt said that some people had suggested gifts to Great Britain, and that although gifts might be necessary, there were other ways of building up American production facilities

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this letter, see Churchill, II, 494-501. The letter was given to Mr. Hull in Washington on December 8 for delivery to Mr. Roosevelt. Lord Lothian, in a public statement on November 23 after his return to the United States, mentioned the financial problem in plain terms. See also, above, Introduction, pp. xxi-ii.

and continuing the flow of munitions to Great Britain. The United States might take on British orders, since they were for commodities required also for American needs, and might then sell or lease the products to Great Britain. On the view that the best defence of Great Britain was also the best defence of the United States, the materials would be more valuable in use than 'if kept in storage.' Mr. Roosevelt said that he wanted to get rid of the dollar sign in the relations between the two countries and to substitute a gentleman's agreement. The Foreign Office does not appear to have recognised at once the immense significance of these words. Mr. Neville Butler, who was at this time *chargé d'affaires* at Washington,<sup>1</sup> suggested on the night of December 18-19 that the Prime Minister might make a public acknowledgement of the President's statement. The Foreign Office (with the agreement of the Treasury) thought it unwise to make a special occasion of such an acknowledgement but suggested that a general reference to American help and to Mr. Roosevelt's plan, and also to our own determination and capacity to win the war if we had the necessary supplies, might be brought into any statement given to the House of Commons on the military situation. Meanwhile the Prime Minister had made no arrangements for a speech, and Parliament had adjourned until January 21.

Mr. Roosevelt spoke even more frankly on December 29 in a broadcast 'fireside' talk to the American people on national security, but the form which his proposals would take was not yet known. The Prime Minister sent him a message of thanks on December 31 in which he also raised some of the immediate questions which were of deep concern to the War Cabinet, e.g., how could we pay for our orders if Congress took a long time to debate the proposals? The answers to these questions became clear after the introduction of the Lend-Lease Bill in Congress on January 10, 1941. This bill passed into law on March 11, 1941, and with its passage the government and people of the United States showed that they intended to prevent a British defeat through lack of the material means of defence.

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Lothian died after a short illness on December 12. Lord Halifax was appointed as his successor, and Mr. Eden succeeded Lord Halifax as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

## CHAPTER V

### Great Britain, General de Gaulle, and the Vichy Government from July, 1940, to September, 1942

#### (i)

*The attitude of the Vichy Government towards Great Britain to the end of 1940: further British recognition of General de Gaulle: contacts with the Vichy Government through the French Embassy at Madrid: Mr. Dupuy's conversations at Vichy.*

DURING the latter half of 1940, while Anglo-American relations were beginning slowly to take the pattern of a military alliance, the relations between Great Britain and France remained uncertain and angry. At the time of their own surrender Marshal Pétain and his Government had assumed that Great Britain would be compelled to give up resistance in a matter of weeks. They persisted in their defeatism after the facts had shown that a British surrender would not be immediate and very possibly might not take place at all.<sup>1</sup> Moreover one consequence of the French surrender was a mood of sullen resentment against Great Britain based on allegations that she had dragged France recklessly into a war for which neither country was prepared and had then given inadequate help to the French armies. In this mood the 'men of Vichy'<sup>2</sup> were even more indignant at the British support of General de Gaulle whose Movement affected their own chances of getting favourable treatment from the Germans.

The Foreign Office did not consider a less unfriendly development in French official opinion as out of the question. In the late summer and autumn of 1940 the converse seemed as likely—i.e., the Germans might turn the French Government actively against us.

<sup>1</sup> See also above, Introduction, p. xxxi.

<sup>2</sup> This term was used in the British press after Marshal Pétain's Government moved from Bordeaux to Vichy (after a short halt at Clermont-Ferrand). About the end of 1940 information reached the Foreign Office that the use of the term 'Vichy Government' officially and by the B.B.C. was causing offence in France. Hence it was decided, as a general rule, to substitute in public statements the term 'Government of Marshal Pétain', but in practice references to the Vichy Government continued.

The British Government did not at this time contest the legality of Marshal Pétain's Government (the Free French maintained that it was not a legal Government). The Foreign Office used the term 'French Government' in official communications with the Vichy Government. They did not wish, however, that this term should be accepted generally, since it carried the implication that the Government at Vichy was free and independent, whereas it was known to be under German control in all vital matters.

The British Government may have underrated the chances of successful 'passive resistance' by the French to German pressure after the armistice, but an influential section of French opinion, represented notably by Laval, was ready to accept the fact of German supremacy in Europe and to make the best of it. The action of Marshal Pétain's Government in returning to the Germans 400 German air force prisoners whom M. Reynaud had promised, more than once, to send to England showed what might be expected from a defeatist *régime*. The gravest danger, however, lay in the terms of the armistice with regard to the French fleet. There was only the worthless safeguard of a German promise that these ships, once demobilised in French ports under German and Italian control, might not be seized. Anyhow, if the French failed to fulfil all their obligations, for example, on the financial side, the Germans might find a pretext for denouncing the armistice with France, and thereby be free from any undertaking to the French Government. After the *dégringolade* at the time of the armistice little confidence could be put in Admiral Darlan's assurances that the ships would be sunk if the Germans tried to get the use of them.

For a time the Foreign Office thought it impossible and indeed undesirable to raise the question of British representation in unoccupied France. After the engagement on July 3 with the French squadron at Oran, the Foreign Office gave M. Cambon<sup>1</sup> a statement of the facts, and of the reasons why the British Government had been compelled to protect themselves against the possibility of the Germans or Italians getting possession of the French ships.<sup>2</sup> M. Cambon replied on July 4 that the engagement had created so serious a situation that he could not foresee the decision of the Government of the Republic. M. Cambon resigned on the following day. The Marquis de Castellane, who took his place, told the Foreign Office that within a few days he would be making a communication that the French Government could no longer continue unilateral diplomatic relations with the British Government. The Secretary of State replied to this formal communication that, if suitable arrangements could be made, we were ready to appoint a *chargé d'affaires*. The French would not accept this suggestion, but proposed to appoint a representative for the liquidation of economic and other matters between the two Governments. The Foreign Office understood this step to mean that the French did not intend entirely to close down

<sup>1</sup> M. Corbin had resigned his post as Ambassador on June 26. M. Cambon had remained as *chargé d'affaires*.

<sup>2</sup> The decisions which had this engagement as their sequel—and the French misrepresentation of the conditions offered to their admiral at Oran—fall outside the scope of this History. See S. W. Roskill, *The War At Sea* (History of the Second World War, U.K. Military Series), I, 241–5. The War Cabinet was aware of the political risks—a declaration of war by Marshal Pétain's Government—but agreed that it was necessary to take them.

their representation. They therefore proposed the appointment of a Consul-General at Vichy in order to balance the French representative in Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> The British Government designated Sir N. Bland as British Agent at Vichy. The French Government let it be understood that this appointment was acceptable to them, but on July 25 M. Chartier brought a statement to the Foreign Office that, since their agreement to exchange agents, the British Government had detained a number of officers belonging to French missions in Great Britain, and had also authorised the dropping of leaflets in Morocco. Until these two matters had been disposed of, the French Government could not receive Sir N. Bland.

The Foreign Office gave a conciliatory answer in order to allow the French, if they wished, to withdraw their refusal, but the only reply was a demand on August 4 for assurances that we would refrain from any action hostile to the French Government in France and throughout French territories overseas. The Foreign Office replied that, though they themselves continued 'to attach importance to the exchange of Agents,' they were unable to find any indication that the French Government desired 'the maintenance of contact between the two Governments in the manner which had been agreed.'<sup>2</sup>

The French conditions were incompatible with the British recognition of General de Gaulle. General de Gaulle had written to the Prime Minister on July 30 that he wished at a later stage to set up a Conseil de Défense de la France d'Outre-mer. The Prime Minister replied on August 5 that the British Government approved in principle of the formation at a suitable time of a Council composed of the authorities in the French colonies which decided to join General de Gaulle in fighting the war, and would discuss with it all matters involving collaboration in the defence of these colonies or affecting their economic interests.<sup>3</sup> On August 7 the Prime Minister sent General de Gaulle an agreed memorandum on the organisation, employment, and conditions of service of French volunteers under his command. The memorandum included the phrase 'this force will never be required to take up arms against France'; in a covering letter the Prime Minister wrote that Great Britain was determined, when victory had been gained, 'to secure the full restoration of the independence and greatness of France.'

The memorandum and the covering letters were published. In an unpublished letter of the same day to General de Gaulle the Prime Minister explained that he thought it necessary to put on record that

<sup>1</sup> M. Chartier, French Consul-General in London, had been designated as Acting French Agent.

<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office were reliably informed at the end of September that the real reason for the French refusal was German pressure.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 99, note 1.



the expression 'full restoration of the independence and greatness of France' had 'no precise relation to territorial frontiers.' We had not been able to guarantee such frontiers to any nation now acting with us, but 'of course, we shall do our best.' The article in the memorandum specifying that General de Gaulle's troops would not have to take up arms against France also had to be interpreted as meaning a France free to choose her course without being under direct or indirect duress from the Germans.

At the end of August General de Gaulle took over the administration of the Chad territory and the Cameroons under French mandate. With the recognition of the British Government he could now use the title of leader of 'Free France' as well as of the 'Free French'. In another exchange of letters on August 27 the Prime Minister promised the Free French territories economic assistance and defence from attack by sea. He explained to General de Gaulle that our policy was to regard the Free French territories as being administered in trust for a Free France of the future. We should prefer to deal with the administration through a Council of Defence rather than through an individual, but we were prepared to continue our arrangement with General de Gaulle or with General Catroux if General de Gaulle came to an arrangement with him.

The Vichy Government sent a protest to the Foreign Office on August 31 against the Prime Minister's letter of August 27 to General de Gaulle. They regarded the Prime Minister's words as an attack upon themselves, and objected to the promise of assistance to French colonies which had 'rebelled' against France. The British reply stated surprise that the French Government objected to the grant of assistance to colonies which had 'freely declared their desire to assist in securing the retention of the French Overseas Empire for France.' Meanwhile Sir S. Hoare, British Ambassador in Madrid, had received from the French Embassy a note that contact might be maintained through the two Embassies in Madrid, but that it would be of no value unless the British Government gave up interference with French overseas possessions and other activities embarrassing to the French Government.

From this time to the end of the year the Foreign Office received a number of messages of an inconclusive kind through the French Embassy at Madrid, and other channels. Three of these messages in early and mid-September came from M. Baudouin. The first message argued against British support of General de Gaulle. A reply was sent that the movements in Africa were spontaneous in origin, and that we did not intend to withdraw our support from General de Gaulle. A second message was that the French Government wanted

to maintain contact with the British Government and ultimately to take up arms against Germany. In order to develop French resistance it was necessary to provide food; hence the French Government was asking that—without any ostensible raising of the blockade—some food ships should be allowed to reach French ports. It was impossible—in view of the acts of the Vichy Government—on the British side to judge whether this appeal was or was not mainly a trick to secure the lifting of the blockade. Hence no answer was sent. A third message suggested a colonial *modus vivendi*, without giving details of the plan.

A fourth message from M. Baudouin was received after the failure of General de Gaulle's attempt to win Dakar to his Movement, to the effect that, if the French Government were not to be driven entirely into German hands, Great Britain must allow supplies to reach unoccupied France from the French colonies. The French Government would guarantee that these supplies or their equivalent did not fall into German hands. If the Germans tried to seize them, the French Government would move to Morocco, and France would be united again with Great Britain against Germany.

On October 3 Sir S. Hoare was authorised to send a reply to this message. The reply began by a reference to M. Baudouin's earlier question about a colonial *modus vivendi*. Since M. Baudouin had put this question French forces had fired on British troops at Dakar when invited to parley and French aircraft had bombed Gibraltar without warning.<sup>1</sup> We should meet any further attack by retaliation against French colonial ports and territory. Furthermore we could not withdraw our support of General de Gaulle's Movement. Subject to these conditions we were willing to consider a discussion on proposals for trade—with due safeguards—between the French colonies and unoccupied France, but we could relax our blockade in favour of unoccupied France only if we were assured that the French Government were able and willing to act in regard to their overseas possessions 'independently of German and Italian dictation' and were also 'ready to adopt a more cooperative attitude than they had hitherto shown.'

The French answer, on October 14, maintained that the French Government had not taken and would not take the initiative in attack, but would reply to attacks on French ships or territory. British recognition of any authority in the French Empire other than the French Government, or attempts to detach French possessions from this Government would make Anglo-French reconciliation impossible. The French Government, however, 'earnestly' desired the

<sup>1</sup> After the Dakar affair a message from the French Admiralty had been received through the French naval attaché at Madrid stating that the French navy would retaliate against any further attack as they had retaliated against the attempted landing at Dakar by the bombing of Gibraltar, and that they would make the Mediterranean untenable for us if we did not suspend all attacks, renounce propaganda for a civil war, and allow the passage of food supplies. No answer was sent to this message.

establishment of an economic *modus vivendi* with regard to trade between France and the colonies.

Sir S. Hoare was instructed on October 19 to give a verbal answer maintaining our previous statements and suggesting discussions at Madrid. He was also told to say that we still wished to collaborate with the French Government against the common enemy; we were confident of victory, and could not understand why some of the French leaders did not now go to North Africa and make common cause with us there. Sir S. Hoare let it be understood that we wished this hint to reach Generals Weygand and Noguès who were already in Africa.<sup>1</sup>

At this stage reports reached the Foreign Office that Laval<sup>2</sup> had told the Vichy Government of a peace offer from the Germans. The terms of the offer were said to be that France would take part with Germany and Italy in the new world order not as a Great Power, but as an 'Associated Power'; that she would cede Alsace-Lorraine to Germany and Nice to Italy, but would keep Algeria. Germany would receive back her former colonies, and all other French colonies would become a Franco-German-Italian condominium. French troops in Africa, and the French fleet and air force would join in the offensive against the British Empire in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Laval, Baudouin, and Admiral Darlan were said to be in favour of these terms, but Marshal Pétain, with the strong support of General Weygand, had refused them. Later reports received by the Foreign Office suggested doubts about the detail of this earlier information, though not about Laval's general intention. Hence the Foreign Office thought it necessary to impress upon the French people the enormity of the commitments which Laval was trying to force upon them. The Prime Minister therefore broadcast on October 21 a warning to the French people that Hitler intended the obliteration of France, and an appeal to them at least not to hinder, if they could not help, the British in their work for victory.<sup>3</sup>

Obviously this appeal would have no influence upon the Vichy Government; the only effective means of pressure on them could come from the United States. The Prime Minister suggested to Mr. Roosevelt that he might warn the French Ambassador in Washington that the United States would disapprove strongly if the French fleet at Toulon were handed over to the Germans.<sup>4</sup> On October 25 the Prime Minister sent another message on the urgency of the matter.

<sup>1</sup> General Weygand had been appointed Delegate-General of the French Government in North Africa on September 9.

<sup>2</sup> Laval met Hitler and Ribbentrop on October 22 at Montoire, when Hitler was on his way to a meeting with General Franco at Hendaye. Marshal Pétain came to Montoire with Laval two days later to meet Hitler on his return journey.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this broadcast, see Churchill, II, 451-3.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 454-5.

This message crossed a telegram from the President that he had given Marshal Pétain a very strong warning about the French fleet. The Prime Minister sent his thanks to the President on October 26,<sup>1</sup> and at the same time hoped that the President would make it clear that his warning to the French applied also to any surrender of bases. Meanwhile the French Ambassador at Madrid had suggested that His Majesty the King might make a personal appeal to Marshal Pétain. The War Cabinet agreed with this suggestion, and the message was sent during the afternoon of October 25. The message, after an expression of sympathy and a repetition of our resolve to restore the freedom and greatness of France, referred to the reported attempts of the Germans to obtain peace terms far beyond the provisions of the armistice. The French answer was little more than a statement of charges against Great Britain. These charges were also made in a reply to the President, though the message to the latter said that the French Government had already given a pledge that the fleet would not be handed over to the Germans.

Before the French reply had been received, the Foreign Office were considering an important broadcast delivered by Marshal Pétain on October 30. According to this broadcast, the principles of Franco-German collaboration had been accepted, and their application left for later discussion. There was nothing to show what price the French would have to pay for the 'alleviations' which they hoped to obtain. Sir S. Hoare was instructed on November 1 to tell the French Ambassador that we had no answer to our message of October, but that meanwhile the Vichy Government appeared to have begun negotiations with the Germans on matters which must affect us. We had no reliable information about these negotiations, and therefore had a right to ask the Vichy Government to tell us what agreement they had reached with the Germans. It was not enough for the French to protest that they would not allow the Germans to use their bases; the Germans might succeed in taking them for themselves. If we had not been continuing our resistance, the French would have been unable to make any kind of bargain with the Germans. Sir S. Hoare was authorised to repeat that, if the French forced us into hostilities, we should take reprisals against unoccupied France, and possibly against Vichy itself.

Sir S. Hoare saw the French Ambassador on November 4.<sup>2</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, II, 455. Mr. Churchill sent another message on October 27 that we had not yet heard 'what Vichy has agreed to.' On October 26 an article in the French press (attributed to Laval) suggested that durable security for France could be found only in collaboration with Germany. Laval's appointment as Foreign Minister, which had been rumoured on October 26, was announced on October 28, and on this day he went with General Huntziger to confer with the Germans in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Butler reported from Washington on November 6-7 that Mr. Hull had warned the French Ambassador that the United States Government regarded it as of vital concern to themselves that the French should do nothing to help Hitler's war effort against Great Britain.

found him greatly depressed. He had heard nothing from Vichy, but feared that Laval intended to sign a peace treaty on November 11, and to use the French fleet and certain military units for the recovery of the colonies which had declared for General de Gaulle. On November 7, after further reports of Laval's activities had reached the Foreign Office, Sir S. Hoare was instructed to explain frankly that we had contracted obligations to General de Gaulle at a time when the French Government had not been able to secure the defence of their Empire. If the Vichy Government could now satisfy us that they intended to defend their overseas territories and prevent their absorption by the enemy, and if they would refrain from attacking the territories which had declared in the main for General de Gaulle, we would also refrain from attacking Dakar. Our purpose, after victory had been won, was to ensure 'the restoration of France and the unity of her Empire, including those territories which at present look to the Free French Movement.' Sir S. Hoare was unable to convince the French chargé d'affaires<sup>1</sup> that we could not repudiate General de Gaulle, but the chargé d'affaires agreed to transmit to the Vichy Government the points made to him. The French reply—on November 11—was, as before, to disclaim any intention of attacking Great Britain and to protest against British assistance to 'rebels'. The conversations with the Germans had not affected French liberty of action, and the French hoped that we would not hinder their shipping which only served the provisioning of the civilian population.

In delivering this reply, the French chargé d'affaires said that the Vichy Government were in a very difficult position, and that their intentions were better than their words. The United States Government also reported that Marshal Pétain had told the United States chargé d'affaires at Vichy that the two French battleships *Richelieu* and *Jean Bart* were not being moved to Toulon,<sup>2</sup> and that the French fleet would not be allowed to fall into German hands.

During these exchanges with the Vichy Government General de Gaulle was in Equatorial Africa. He had previously decided to establish his headquarters there, but on October 29 the Foreign Office heard that he proposed to come back to London at the end of November. General de Gaulle was in fact disturbed at the British

<sup>1</sup> There was a change of French Ambassadors at Madrid at this time. M. Piétri succeeded M. de La Baume, but the former did not present his credentials until early in December.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Hoare had been instructed on November 3 to tell the French Ambassador that he had heard reports that these ships were to be moved respectively from Dakar and Casablanca. We 'earnestly hoped' that this step would not be taken, since we wanted to avoid any clash between British and French naval forces. The French replied that they would move the ships if they wished, but that they did not propose to do so. The Prime Minister asked Mr. Roosevelt whether he would warn the Vichy Government against moving the ships. For the text of the Prime Minister's message, see Churchill, II, 456-7.

attitude towards the Vichy Government; he and his colleagues on the Council of Defence<sup>1</sup> thought that a policy of conciliation would have had results both in France and the Empire. The Foreign Office considered it desirable that General de Gaulle should come back for discussions, but that there were arguments against fixing his headquarters in London since we should be less able to refute enemy propaganda that he was merely a British puppet.

The Prime Minister sent messages to General de Gaulle on November 9 and 10 suggesting that he should return at once and explaining shortly our policy towards the Vichy Government.<sup>2</sup> General de Gaulle reached London on November 20. He saw the Prime Minister on November 25, and Lord Halifax three days later. He warned them of the dangerous and persistent opposition to be expected from Admiral Darlan. He thought that on a short view we might not be wrong in trying to establish a *modus vivendi* with the Vichy Government, but that concessions to them would not have more than a delaying effect, while they might offend the majority of Frenchmen who were coming to see that their Government was entirely under German control.

After receiving the French reply of November 11 the Foreign Office considered that the Vichy Government had begun to realise that they had a certain opportunity of manoeuvre owing to the continued resistance of Great Britain, and also to German difficulties with Italy and Spain. At all events the Germans had failed to get an interim settlement which would give them control of French resources. The Vichy Government were also trying to keep the fleet and Empire out of Axis control. We ought to aim at a rapprochement between Generals de Gaulle, Catroux and Weygand.<sup>3</sup> We could not reconcile General de Gaulle and Vichy, and were bound to support the former in the territories now administered by him, but there was no reason for trouble between General de Gaulle or ourselves and Vichy if it were clear that the other French territories overseas intended to

<sup>1</sup> On October 27 General de Gaulle announced that he was setting up a Council of the Defence of the Empire (see above, p. 93) which, until the reconstitution of a regular French Government, would exercise in the liberated territories the powers of a governing authority. The Prime Minister informed General de Gaulle on December 24, 1940, that the British Government recognised the Council. The Prime Minister made it clear, however, that he was not expressing any views on the 'constitutional and juridical considerations' in General de Gaulle's decrees and declarations regarding the Council.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this second message, see Churchill, II, 457. On November 13 Free French Forces entered Libreville. Two days later the whole of the Gaboon became part of the Free French territory.

<sup>3</sup> General Catroux had been Governor General of French Indo-China. He was deprived of his post by the Vichy Government, and (with British help) came to England in August, 1940. He joined the Free French Movement and became a member of the Council for the Defence of the Empire. General de Gaulle appointed General Catroux as his representative in the Middle East.



keep out the Germans and Italians. We should make these general points in a discussion with Vichy which might begin on economic questions.<sup>1</sup>

Sir S. Hoare was instructed on November 22 to put to the French Ambassador that all we asked of the Vichy Government was that they should not attack the Free French colonies; that they should resist German or Italian attack or infiltration into other French colonies, and that they should prevent their ports or territories from being used as bases for air or submarine attacks on us. On our side, we did not seek to acquire any French territory, but if any part of the French Empire should declare for General de Gaulle, we should recognise such a declaration, and apply to it our promise to defend from the sea territory under General de Gaulle's control.<sup>2</sup> On this understanding we were prepared to begin economic discussions and to start with a review of the question of trade between French North Africa and unoccupied France.<sup>3</sup> The Vichy Government did not inform the British Embassy at Madrid until January 10, 1941, of the points on which they wished to begin economic discussions. Their answer was then unsatisfactory; they asked for imports of 600,000 tons of wheat and 200,000 tons of maize into unoccupied France. Sir S. Hoare pointed out at once that the British Government could hardly be expected to agree to imports on this scale, since it would enable the Germans to use the normal surplus of cereals in occupied France to feed their armies. Sir S. Hoare was given a written answer for the French in these terms on January 24, 1941.

Since the early part of November the Foreign Office had also obtained an important indirect contact with the Vichy Government through Mr. Dupuy, Canadian chargé d'affaires designate at Vichy. The Secretary of State asked Mr. Dupuy, who was arranging to go to France, to let the Vichy Government know that we realised the French feeling of resentment against us, since we were assumed—wrongly—not to have helped them adequately and now to be taking action against their naval forces. We wanted the French to understand that we were fighting for them as well as ourselves, and that our acts of which they complained were due to our fear that in their

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister agreed with the desirability of making contacts with the Vichy Government, but did not think that a policy of conciliation would take us far with them, or that we should hesitate, when our interests required, to 'make them feel that we have teeth as well as Hitler.' For a memorandum on the subject written by the Prime Minister on November 14, see Churchill, II, 466-7.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Hoare was instructed to repeat our previous statement of intention to restore the greatness and independence of France and to say again that this declaration covered those parts of the Empire which had declared or might declare for General de Gaulle.

<sup>3</sup> For these questions, see Medlicott, I, ch. XVI.



situation they could not resist pressure or trickery by the Germans to obtain the use of French resources against us.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Dupuy saw Marshal Pétain on November 24, and found him 'rather well disposed' towards Great Britain, but holding the view that General de Gaulle was an obstacle to the improvement of relations.<sup>2</sup> He told Mr. Dupuy that the French naval bases would be defended against any attack. Mr. Dupuy asked—apparently at a later conversation—whether Marshal Pétain meant that he would not cede these bases to Germany. Marshal Pétain replied that he might have to cede bases if in the course of negotiations he were offered satisfactory compensation. He regarded such cession as passive and not active intervention on the side of Germany. He wanted a British victory, and would do nothing against the British cause.

In view of these contradictory statements Mr. Dupuy enquired from one of Marshal Pétain's private advisers, and was told that the reference to a possible surrender of bases represented a further success for the influence of Laval, but that this success would not be lasting. Mr. Dupuy left Vichy on December 7. On the previous day Admiral Darlan had told him that the French Government would resist, at all events until February, 1941, and possibly longer, German pressure on them to attack the Free French colonies, and that there was now no question of a surrender of metropolitan or African bases. If German pressure were irresistible, the French would invite us in sufficient time to take the bases.

The announcement of Laval's dismissal on December 13 and the appointment of Flandin in his place thus seemed on the whole favourable news, although the Foreign Office thought that there was some danger that Flandin, as a more 'respectable' politician in French eyes, might be more effective in persuading his colleagues to cooperate with Germany. At the end of December, Mr. Dupuy was arranging to go back to Vichy, and, if possible, on his return journey, to visit North Africa and to see General Weygand. The Prime Minister authorised him to tell General Weygand that, if he were willing to begin resistance in North Africa, we would support him to the extent of six divisions, and with naval and air forces.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Dupuy was also asked to say that we were ready to hold secret staff talks, and that we regarded delay as dangerous. The Germans might come

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dupuy was asked to point out that events had falsified the two main assumptions upon which the French Government had concluded an armistice. France had not obtained honourable terms from Germany and Great Britain had not been forced into surrender.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Dupuy reported that Marshal Pétain looked tired and sleepy, and that he nearly fell asleep three times early in the conversation. Mr. Dupuy succeeded in rousing him by loudly repeating the name of General de Gaulle. The Marshal's reaction was then immediate.

<sup>3</sup> The Chiefs of Staff thought that we could spare these reinforcements which would otherwise go to the Middle East. See Churchill, II, 550-1 and 629-30.

through Spain, close the Straits by taking over the batteries on each side, and establish themselves in Morocco.

The Prime Minister authorised Mr. Dupuy to give this information to Marshal Pétain, since we had heard that he needed support in his resistance to German demands. Mr. Dupuy did not return to Vichy until the end of January, 1941, and did not go to North Africa. The message was therefore sent to Marshal Pétain in the last week of January through the United States chargé d'affaires at Vichy, and to General Weygand about the same time. Neither Marshal Pétain nor General Weygand answered these messages.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The British Government had made an earlier overture to General Weygand through a Professor Louis Rougier. Professor Rougier had come to London on October 22 not as an official agent but with the approval of Marshal Pétain and M. Baudouin. He made a number of proposals, similar to those put forward through other channels, for the improvement of British relations with the Vichy Government. On October 28 M. Rougier suggested that, instead of returning to Vichy (where Laval had now become Foreign Minister), he might go to North Africa in order to see Generals Weygand and Nogues. On the advice of the French Ambassador at Madrid, the Foreign Office approved this suggestion, and told M. Rougier that we would receive any accredited persons whom General Weygand cared to send to us. M. Rougier saw General Weygand, but the General refused any contact with British representatives. On December 6, Professor Rougier went to the United States from Lisbon. Before leaving Europe he wrote to the Prime Minister and Lord Halifax that he had received assurances from Marshal Pétain that France would not sign a separate peace with the Axis before the end of hostilities between Great Britain and Germany, or cede naval or air bases or the fleet to the Axis. She would resist any attempt by Spain, Germany or Italy to seize French North Africa, and would accept the submission of French Equatorial Africa to General de Gaulle on the understanding that no attack would be directed against French North or West Africa or Morocco. No further action was or indeed could be taken through Professor Rougier, since he remained in the United States. From his subsequent account of these transactions, Professor Rougier seems to have had the wrong impression during his talks in London that he was being offered the text of a secret "gentleman's agreement" which, if accepted by Marshal Pétain, would henceforward be binding on the two Governments. This was not the intention of the British Ministers; the discussions were understood by them and by the Foreign Office merely as an exchange of views on the possible basis of an agreement for the implementation of which the British Government would obviously require practical evidence of sincerity on the French side. A certain amount of confusion was bound to arise in these tentative approaches by individuals especially when the purposes on each side were very different. The British aim was primarily to prevent increased French collaboration with Germany and to secure contact with General Weygand with a view to French military co-operation in North Africa, while the French were concerned not with the revival of resistance, but with the lifting of the British blockade and with preventing any further loss of colonies to General de Gaulle. Similar considerations apply to the correspondence early in December between Lord Halifax and a personal friend in France, M. Jacques Chevalier. The confusion was not lessened by Marshal Pétain's vagueness in negotiation, and his ill-defined but persistent assumption that France could arrange with each of the belligerents to 'contract out' of the war on terms favourable to herself. In the latter part of June, 1941, a Colonel Groussard came to London with the knowledge of Marshal Pétain and General Huntziger. The main purpose of his visit seemed to be to obtain information which would enable the Vichy authorities to assess the chances of a British victory. He did not suggest any hope of French assistance to the Allied cause, or any readiness on the side of Vichy to make sacrifices in order to bring about the defeat of Germany.

## (ii)

*The attitude of the Vichy Government in 1941: the question of supplies to North Africa and unoccupied France: British and American attempts to prevent further French concessions to the Germans.*

At the end of 1940 there had seemed to be some chance of reaching an economic agreement with the Vichy Government, but the French demands, from a British point of view, were impossibly high, and early in February the negotiations faded out. The Foreign Office now hoped little from Vichy. Marshal Pétain remained convinced of the impossibility of a British victory, and therefore continued to regard the Free French Movement not only as a form of high treason, but as likely to lessen the chances of a favourable arrangement with Germany. This mirage of a 'favourable peace'—the final stage of 'contracting out' from the war—dominated French policy in the spring and summer of 1941. The Foreign Office, from reliable evidence which came into their hands, realised that the Vichy Ministers had looked upon the régime established by the armistice as something which would last only until the war ended with the defeat of Great Britain. The chances of an early peace had now receded, and the French plan was now to try to shift relations with Germany from the basis of a *diktat* to one of collaboration. Collaboration meant more concessions to Germany.

Even if he had held a more robust view of the prospects of the war, and a more realistic view of German promises, Marshal Pétain was surrounded by men who were pushing him always towards concessions. Laval welcomed Franco-German collaboration as a desirable end. The Foreign Office regarded Darlan as, perhaps, even more dangerous because he was less unpopular in France, and also because personal resentment against Great Britain was a dominant motive in his policy. Darlan and Laval were rivals for Pétain's place; early in February, 1941, Darlan became Vice-Premier as well as Foreign Minister and the Marshal's successor-designate.

In these circumstances the Foreign Office did not agree with the United States Government that a policy of concessions, especially in the matter of supplies to unoccupied France, would bring the Vichy Government any nearer to resisting German demands. The Foreign Office considered that American help would merely improve the internal position of the Vichy Government and enable them to play with both sides. Even if the food position in unoccupied France were as bad as the Vichy Government alleged it to be—and the Foreign

Office had conflicting reports on the subject—the relief of France meant an addition to German resources, and therefore a prolongation of the war and of the misery of other peoples under German occupation.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office, however, thought it undesirable to oppose altogether the American proposals for relief, especially because we could not in fact maintain an effective blockade of unoccupied France or North Africa, and the French were known to be importing supplies across the Mediterranean on a large scale.<sup>2</sup>

The question of supplies to North Africa was different. The Foreign Office were much less hopeful than the State Department that economic support might strengthen General Weygand's determination to resist German demands, but they were willing to give the policy a trial if there were no serious interference with the blockade or serious risk that the supplies would fall into enemy hands. Anyhow the possibilities of control were greater in North Africa and such control could be used as a means of getting information and counteracting German and Italian influences. The British Government, therefore, agreed in February, 1941, to the American proposals to send supplies to North Africa in limited quantities and under the supervision of American observers.

American pressure on the British Government to allow the import of supplies into unoccupied France was lessened at the end of March when it was known that Admiral Darlan had concluded a barter arrangement whereby the Germans would supply the Vichy Government with 800,000 tons of wheat in return for the export of livestock from unoccupied France. The Americans, however, agreed in principle to send more shipments of wheat, but suspended them after Marshal Pétain had delivered on May 15 a strongly collaborationist broadcast.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the President was ready to take firm as well as conciliatory action towards Vichy. On April 2 the Prime Minister telegraphed to him that, according to information received by the Admiralty, the French were intending to send the battleship *Dunkerque* from Oran to Toulon. The Prime Minister asked Mr. Roosevelt to warn Admiral Darlan that if he insisted on this move, he would be cutting off relief supplies and would forfeit American

<sup>1</sup> The proposals for European relief put forward at this time by Mr. Hoover and others covered a wider area than unoccupied France. Relief on the scale suggested by them would have been incompatible with any real control of the supplies, and would have benefited the Germans and prolonged the war at the expense of the people whose sufferings it was intended to relieve. The Foreign Office regarded as suspect a good deal of the support for proposals involving a relaxation of the blockade, since it came from elements in the United States known to be working for a compromise peace. For the Anglo-American discussions on the question of supplies to unoccupied France and North Africa, see Medlicott, I, ch. XVI.

<sup>2</sup> The French seem to have thought that we were refraining voluntarily from intercepting this traffic.

<sup>3</sup> For Marshal Pétain's broadcast of May 15, see below, p. 106.

sympathy for France. The President sent a warning to Marshal Pétain, and the ship was not moved.<sup>1</sup>

The German advance into the Balkans, and especially the revolt of Rashid Ali in Iraq, made another serious warning necessary. When it was clear that trouble was imminent in Iraq, the British Government did not know whether General Dentz, French High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief in Syria, would resist a German airborne landing.<sup>2</sup> They therefore asked the United States Government to transmit a message to Marshal Pétain. The message pointed out that if the French gave way to German demands, they would have been driven from 'capitulation to collaboration and from collaboration to participation in the war.' We could not then continue to maintain a distinction between occupied and unoccupied France. If on the other hand the French Government resisted the German encroachments, we would give them the utmost assistance.

Lord Halifax was asked to explain to the United States Government that this message represented all that we ourselves were able to do, and that we should much value any step which they might take to try to stop the French from further surrender. The State Department thought that we were asking the French to abandon the armistice and to resume fighting. They could not do this, and our proposal would only nullify the policy of encouragement which we had been adopting towards the French in North Africa. Lord Halifax agreed to the suspension of the message for the time on the condition that Admiral Leahy should speak in its general sense to Marshal Pétain.

The Secretary of State approved of Lord Halifax's action. Admiral Leahy saw Marshal Pétain on May 3. As the Foreign Office expected, Marshal Pétain maintained his usual position. He did not comment on the British offer of help; he repeated that he would not go beyond the terms of the armistice, and that these terms bound him not to allow the use of the French fleet against the Axis. Admiral Leahy thought that there was no hope of French resistance until a

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<sup>1</sup> For the correspondence on this question, see Churchill, III, 113-17. Mr. Churchill told the President for his own information that if the ship were moved, we should have to intercept and sink her. The President replied that he would 'understand' if we had to make such an attack. The Admiralty was specially anxious to prevent the *Dunkerque* from getting into German hands because the German battleship *Bismarck* was nearing completion. The Vichy Government informed Admiral Leahy on April 8, 1941, that they would keep the ship at Oran until an agreement had been reached on the subject. M. Rochat, a senior official of the Vichy Foreign Office, gave his personal assurance that plans for moving the ship had been given up for the time. He promised to let the United States Embassy know of any change of intention. For the breach of this promise by the Vichy Government, see below, p. 112, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> There was also reason to expect that the Germans might ask to occupy Morocco or to be given a passage through unoccupied France.

British victory had shewn that the Germans could be defeated. In spite of Marshal Pétain's assurances the British authorities learned on May 12 and 13 that German aircraft on their way to assist Rashid Ali and the Iraqi rebels had been seen on Syrian airfields and that French arms and ammunition were being sent by rail from Syria to Iraq. The R.A.F. then attacked the Syrian airfields. The Foreign Office asked the United States Government to transmit to the Vichy Government the text of a statement made in the House of Commons<sup>1</sup> on May 15 that full responsibility for the attacks on Syrian airfields rested with the Vichy Government since their action in allowing the German flights was inconsistent with the terms of the armistice and with the undertakings which the French had given to us.

Meanwhile Admiral Leahy had seen Marshal Pétain again on May 12 in order to deliver a message from Mr. Roosevelt. Admiral Leahy asked whether he might tell the United States Government that Marshal Pétain would not give any military assistance to Germany. Marshal Pétain answered that he would not give any 'voluntary military aid.' Three days later Marshal Pétain delivered a broadcast in which he approved of the meeting between Darlan and Hitler,<sup>2</sup> as 'lightening the path of the future.' He appealed to the French people to follow him 'without any mental reservation,' and said that, if the negotiations succeeded, France would be able to overcome her defeat and retain her rank as a European and colonial Power.

The United States Government, with good reason, regarded this broadcast as evidence that there was little hope of French resistance to German demands. The President issued a statement about Marshal Pétain's previous assurances as the 'least that could be expected from a France which demanded respect for its integrity.' The broadcast, however, was followed by more reports indicating a new Franco-German agreement which included military cooperation and the provision of naval and air bases in North Africa. According to information received by the Foreign Office, the Germans expected France to come into the war on the German side. There were reports that General Weygand had protested against the grant of bases in North Africa, but, after an appeal from Marshal Pétain, had decided to obey the Marshal's orders.

The German attack on Russia was unlikely to make any change in the defeatist attitude of the Vichy Government. Marshal Pétain told Admiral Leahy on June 27 that Hitler was doing a service to the world in attacking the Communists, and that the German army

<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb. 5th Ser., vol. 371, cols. 1264-5.

<sup>2</sup> This meeting had taken place at Berchtesgaden on May 11-12. Darlan told Admiral Leahy about this time that in his dealings with the Germans he had found them more honest than the British.



would meet with no difficulty. At the beginning of November Marshal Pétain was still sure that the Germans would be in Moscow and Rostov within a month and that they would then return to an attack on Great Britain. On November 18—the opening day of the British offensive in Cyrenaica—Marshal Pétain announced the dismissal of General Weygand. He explained to Admiral Leahy that the Germans had compelled him to take this step under threat of sending troops into unoccupied France.<sup>1</sup>

The United States Government decided that they would suspend supplies to North Africa until they were assured that General Weygand's dismissal did not imply a change in policy with regard to North Africa. When Admiral Leahy made a statement to this effect on December 11, the United States was at war with Germany. Marshal Pétain and Admiral Darlan said how much they regretted this fact. Marshal Pétain then explained that the Germans had not asked the French Government to alter their relations with the United States, but that it would be difficult to reject any request from them since they could threaten to starve France. Later the French Government gave Admiral Leahy three memoranda stating (i) that the French fleet would not be used against Great Britain except in the event of hostile British action,<sup>2</sup> (ii) that General Weygand's recall did not mean a change in policy, (iii) that the French would not allow the use of French territory as bases, and (iv) that France would remain neutral.

Before leaving England for his visit to the United States the Prime Minister had considered the possibility of a joint Anglo-American note to the Vichy Government requiring them to show by some act, e.g. sinking their fleet, or starting a revolt in North Africa, that they were on our side. If they agreed, we should reaffirm our promises to France—with American backing—but, if they refused, we should say that we and the United States did not recognise them as the legitimate government of France and were free to take any measures against them which we thought fit. The Foreign Office were not in favour of sending this note. They did not expect Marshal Pétain to do anything favourable to us until he was sure that we and the Americans were winning the war. Since we did not want to risk having the French fleet used against us, we had better avoid putting any sharp alternatives to the Vichy Government.

<sup>1</sup> For a message from the Prime Minister to President Roosevelt on November 20 suggesting that the United States Government should use their influence to keep General Weygand in office or to ensure that his successor was 'some friendly figure' like General Georges, see Churchill, III, 507.

<sup>2</sup> The Vichy Government sent a message through the French naval attaché at Madrid at the end of December, 1941, to the British Government that there was no truth in reports about the cessation of bases or of the fleet. Marshal Pétain would never give way on these points, and Admiral Darlan would not act against the Marshal's wishes.



## (iii)

*British relations with General de Gaulle in 1941: Syria and the Lebanon: establishment of a Free French National Committee.*

The subservience of the Vichy Government to Germany brought them few material advantages, and in fact lost them control of the French mandated territory of Syria and the Lebanon. Even after the French authorities at the end of June, 1940, had adhered to Marshal Pétain's Government, the Foreign Office wished to avoid anything likely to suggest that Great Britain wanted to acquire these territories. On July 1, 1940, the British Government issued a statement that they could not allow Syria or the Lebanon to be occupied by a hostile Power or used as a base for enemy attack against other Middle Eastern countries or to fall into internal disorder constituting a danger to these countries. For some time after this declaration there seemed to be a chance that the French in Syria might organise a *coup d'état* against the supporters of Vichy, but this possibility had faded at the end of the year. General Catroux,<sup>1</sup> whom General de Gaulle had sent out to the Middle East in the hope of winning over French opinion in Syria, now came to the conclusion that a *coup* would succeed only with British help, and with the support of the local Arab population. Hence he suggested the issue of a declaration in the name of Free France promising Syria and the Lebanon independence, with safeguards for French rights, under an arrangement similar to that safeguarding British rights in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty.

The War Cabinet agreed that this solution would be the best, but that we could not commit ourselves to a plan involving British troops until we had larger forces available. After the German invasion of the Balkans, however, and the consent of the French to the German use of Syrian airfields, the risk of leaving Syria in the hands of the Vichy authorities was too great to allow more delay.

A joint Anglo-French force went into Syria on June 8, and on this day General Catroux, with General de Gaulle's approval, issued a proclamation that henceforward Syria and the Lebanon would be 'sovereign and independent peoples, free either to constitute separate States or to join together in a single State.' In either case their status would be guaranteed by a treaty defining also their relations with the French. On the same day, Sir M. Lampson, British Ambassador in Cairo, issued a statement on behalf of the British Government in support of the declaration of independence.

The military operations in Syria lasted nearly five weeks, and cost

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 99, note 3.

heavy casualties to the British, Australian, Indian and Free French forces. Before the signature of an armistice on July 14 it was clear that the administration, and indeed the political future of Syria and the Lebanon would be a cause of trouble between the British Government and General de Gaulle. General de Gaulle had made it plain that he regarded the British endorsement of the French proclamation as superfluous in a matter which seemed to him the exclusive concern of France and the population of her mandated territories. On June 29 he sent a personal telegram to the Prime Minister expressing anxiety about a 'possible diminution of the position of France' in Syria and the Lebanon, and about the introduction into the areas of 'tendencies and action' which were 'purely British.'

Even if General de Gaulle had been less suspicious of British motives, and more guarded in his public statements, agreement with him over Syria and the Lebanon would not have been easy. The Free French Movement had gained little ground since the autumn of 1940; a few notable individuals had joined it, but the Free French were far from becoming the great military force for which General de Gaulle had hoped. Hence General de Gaulle felt that he could not allow the Vichy Government to accuse him before French opinion of a surrender of the rights of France in the Levant. The longer he could postpone the implementation of the declaration of independence, the greater were his chances of avoiding this accusation of 'selling out' to Great Britain.

On the British side, however, the first consideration with regard to Syria was the grant of independence. Our sole interests were to keep the Germans out of Syria and to satisfy Arab opinion generally that this grant was genuine, and that the Syrians and Lebanese were not merely exchanging one set of Frenchmen for another. We could not ignore—as General de Gaulle ignored—the unpopularity of the French in the Levant, and Arab suspicions that, although the Free French were conceding the form of independence, they had no intention of granting the substance. Furthermore for military and administrative reasons we could not give up during the war final control of policy in the territories to the Free French.

At the beginning of July the War Cabinet had sent Mr. Oliver Lyttelton to the Middle East as Minister of State with Cabinet rank.<sup>1</sup> After difficult negotiation he reached with General de Gaulle on July 25 an agreed interpretation of the armistice convention. The clauses relating to policy within Syria and the Lebanon allowed the Free French to be responsible for all the forces concerned in internal administration. General de Gaulle acknowledged the right of the British High Command to take all measures necessary for common defence, and Mr. Lyttelton in a further letter renewed

<sup>1</sup> See above, Introduction, pp. xxii–iii.

the assurances that Great Britain had no interest in the territories except to win the war. Free France and Great Britain were pledged to the independence of the two countries, and, after the grant of independence had been given effect, the British Government would recognise that France had a position in them predominant over that of any other European Power.

General de Gaulle, however, remained sure that the British military authorities were trying to undermine the position of the Free French in Syria. While he was at Brazzaville he gave an angry interview to an American press correspondent. The interview was published—General de Gaulle, too late, had tried to prevent its publication—and in its summarised form appeared more anti-British than General de Gaulle had meant it to be. After his return to England in September General de Gaulle was for a time in a bitter mood. He accepted a British proposal for the establishment of a Free French National Committee with which the British Government would deal in matters affecting their relations with him and his Movement. From the British point of view this measure was a stage in ‘depersonalising’ the Movement. General de Gaulle welcomed it as giving the direction of his Movement something like the appearance of a government, though Mr. Eden took care to state that British recognition did not commit the British Government to any views about the French constitutional and juridical considerations expressed by General de Gaulle in the *ordonnance* and decrees establishing the committee. Mr. Eden pointed out that we could not exchange diplomatic representation with General de Gaulle since by so doing we should be recognising him as head of a sovereign state.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of 1941, while the Prime Minister was in the United States, General de Gaulle brought about a sudden crisis in his relations with the British and United States Governments. The trouble arose over the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon off the coast of Newfoundland. These islands, under Vichy control, contained a powerful wireless station which could be used to guide German submarines. The British Government suggested that the Free French should be allowed to take and control the islands. The United States Government refused this plan, partly owing to their general policy of giving as little offence as possible to Vichy, and partly because they were pledged to the Latin American States to allow no transfer of sovereignty or possession or control of territory in the western hemisphere. The British Government accepted the American refusal. General de Gaulle disregarded it, and ordered a landing on the islands.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden made a statement in the House of Commons on November 26 on the British attitude towards the Free French National Committee. Parl. Deb. 5th Ser. H. of C., vol. 376, col. 727. See also p. 119.

The Prime Minister now had to try to save General de Gaulle from the consequences of this mistake. Mr. Hull, whose unfriendly attitude towards General de Gaulle seemed to the Foreign Office unreasonable, made matters more difficult by referring to the action of three 'so-called Free French ships.'<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister suggested to the President that as a compromise the British, Canadian and United States Governments should regard the islands as demilitarised. The Free French and the Vichy administrator would withdraw, and the Canadian and United States Governments would send observers to supervise the wireless stations. The War Cabinet disliked this solution, since it seemed absurd, after the behaviour of the Vichy authorities at Dakar and Syria, not to allow General de Gaulle to occupy territories which in fact welcomed him. The War Cabinet, however, agreed to try to persuade General de Gaulle to accept the compromise; they were unwilling to compel him to do so.

General de Gaulle, after a first refusal, agreed to the compromise. Mr. Hull then objected that it would be unacceptable to Vichy. The Foreign Office pointed out that Mr. Hull was greatly underrating American means of pressure on Vichy. Finally, Mr. Hull gave way. The Vichy Government did not attempt any counter-action,<sup>2</sup> and the question of the islands receded into the background during the year 1942 in which much larger issues were being decided.

(iv)

*Views of the Foreign Office with regard to the Vichy Government and General de Gaulle in the first half of 1942: British expedition to Madagascar: difficulties with General de Gaulle: British advocacy of the Free French Movement with the United States Government: General de Gaulle's change of title for his Movement.*

After the entry of the United States into the war, the Prime Minister, who was by temperament a leader of Resistance movements, looked forward to a change of mind—and heart—at Vichy. The Foreign Office remained unhopeful of anything good from the Vichy cliques, and did not expect anything to be gained from a policy of softness towards them. The British Government indeed had no official relations with Vichy; their only chance of exercising diplomatic pressure was through American action, but the Americans were much more inclined than the Foreign Office to reckon on some

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hull went as far as a threat to turn out the Free French by force.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hull told Lord Halifax that Admiral Darlan had hinted that, as a countermove, an arrangement might be made with the Japanese to occupy French islands in the Pacific.

action by Vichy in their favour when they landed either in North Africa or in Metropolitan France. They failed to see that the stubborn delusions of Marshal Pétain and the legalism by which the greater part of the French armed forces held to their allegiance to him were likely to prevent any organised official resistance until it could have little more than a token value.<sup>1</sup>

The difference between British and American treatment of Vichy in 1942 was, however, mainly one of emphasis and 'degree'. The State Department was as much concerned as the Foreign Office in trying to prevent the Vichy Government from going beyond a strict interpretation of the armistice terms. Until the return of Laval to power in April, the main questions turned on the shipment of American supplies to North Africa and the consent of the Vichy Government to the use of French ships to bring military material to the Axis forces in Libya. The United States Government asked on February 10, 1942, for a formal assurance that French ships would not be used for this purpose. The French reply was evasive, and, in the view of the Foreign Office, insolent.<sup>2</sup> The President then sent another request for definite assurances. A second French answer given to Admiral Leahy was in less impertinent terms, but still not satisfactory. Meanwhile the War Cabinet proposed to inform the Vichy Government that certain named ships known to be carrying military supplies from French ports for the use of the Axis forces, and any other French ships similarly employed, would be attacked without further warning. The State Department, however, suggested that the note should be held up in view of their own negotiations with Vichy.

The negotiations had not come to a final conclusion when in mid-April Laval again took office. The United States Government then suspended the sailing of two supply ships.<sup>3</sup> Laval gave a broadcast on April 20 in which he attacked Great Britain and said that no threats would prevent him from following a policy of agreement and

<sup>1</sup> The French Resistance groups which developed in the latter part of 1941 had no single origin and were at first unco-ordinated. Until the German attack on Russia, the Communists had continued to denounce the war as imperialist. After their change of policy they were able to carry out acts of underground resistance more easily because they already had an underground organisation. The Germans, incidentally, by asserting that the whole of the French Resistance Movement was Communist, gave the Communist Party something of an *alibi* for their former defeatism.

<sup>2</sup> The impossibility of trusting Vichy assurances was shewn at this time by the action of the Vichy Government on February 19 in sending the *Dunkerque* from Oran to Toulon, in spite of the assurance given on April 8, 1941, that the United States Embassy at Vichy would be informed if there were any change in the decision not to move the ship. See above, p. 105, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Early in June the Vichy Ministry for Foreign Affairs informed the United States Embassy that the Germans were objecting to the presence of American observers in North Africa, and that the French had great difficulty in making out a case for them in the absence of American shipments. The United States Government allowed the two ships to leave, in spite of the fact that the Vichy authorities had acquiesced in the transport in French ships of more military lorries for Axis use in Libya. See Medicott, II, ch. XII.

conciliation with Germany. On April 29 the Foreign Office was shewn a report from Admiral Leahy of a conversation with Laval.<sup>1</sup> Laval had argued that it was possible to reach an understanding with Germany which would result in a lasting peace, but that a Russian and British victory would mean bolshevism in Europe.<sup>2</sup>

The course of events at Vichy had thus followed the line expected by the Foreign Office. The Prime Minister, however, with his mind turning to the North African invasion, was still inclined to think a sudden change of attitude not wholly out of the question. He considered that the Vichy Government had to pay its way from week to week with its German masters and that they had not done more than was absolutely necessary to stave off a complete German occupation. They had endured Oran, Dakar, Syria, and Madagascar,<sup>3</sup> the British blockade and British air raids with the least possible show of anger. The Foreign Office, on the other hand, did not think that Marshal Pétain's defeatism would change. Laval was not merely paying his way with the Germans; he had staked his life on a German victory. Darlan had arranged for the transport of Axis supplies in French ships and had tried to get Japanese help against us in Madagascar. The forces of resistance in France would not agree to be brought back into the war under the leadership of men who had made no public protestation against the murder of innocent hostages by the Germans and the incorporation of Alsace-Lorraine into the Reich. The weight of evidence was thus against any sudden decisive action by the Vichy Government to bring France actively in the war on our side except at a time when their change of attitude would be too late to have much importance.

The Foreign Office stated their view in a memorandum of June 11, 1942. The Prime Minister replied to Mr. Eden that he thought the Foreign Office was paying too much attention to French information which tended to work up additional hatred against Vichy and to renew enthusiasm for General de Gaulle. He thought that the differences between his own views and those of the Foreign Office were mainly a matter of emphasis, but that more allowance should be made for the 'unnatural conditions prevailing in a defeated country with a government living on the sufferance of the enemy.' He still hoped that the French fleet might sail to Africa and that he might secure an invitation for British or French troops to enter French

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Leahy was recalled for consultation on April 17. Owing to the illness of his wife, he did not actually return to the United States until May. He was not replaced as Ambassador, but the United States continued to be represented at Vichy by a *chargé d'affaires*.

<sup>2</sup> In a broadcast of June 22, in which he appealed for workers to go to Germany, Laval said that he wished 'to see a German victory, since without it Bolshevism will tomorrow appear everywhere.'

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 116-7.



North Africa. In any case, for some time to come, Vichy alone could give us 'those good gifts'; the lives as well as the interests of the Vichy leaders might depend on their making such offers to us.

Mr. Eden decided early in July to circulate another memorandum to the War Cabinet. The memorandum referred to information about the attitude of the forces of resistance in France. The general effect of the reports was to show a confusion of mind in France and in North Africa. About 90 per cent of the people of occupied France, and 60 per cent in unoccupied France wanted an Allied victory, but we did not know their ideas about the future leadership or form of government of the country. Hitherto our policy had been to cooperate with any Frenchmen who stood for resistance with the Germans and to say that after the war the French people would be free to choose their own régime. Many Frenchmen understood this to mean that we should not force General de Gaulle upon them against their will. General de Gaulle was the only leader of French resistance to emerge since the collapse of France, but he had no claim to be regarded as 'France' or as the head of the government of France. There was, in fact, no French authority which could be regarded as generally representative of the French people. General de Gaulle's failings were well known. His sudden actions could be very dangerous. Many of his supporters found him as difficult as we found him. Nevertheless he had upheld the flag of France since June, 1940. We had been largely responsible for 'building him up' in France. If we were to drop him we should lose most of his supporters; we should not find any other leader to take his place, and his disappearance would have a bad effect on the forces of resistance in France.

We had failed to establish any direct relations with the Vichy Government; the Germans had blocked our earlier attempts, and Laval, who had announced his hope of a German victory, would not receive a British representative. We could not go beyond our policy of agreeing that the Americans should maintain contact with Vichy. Any further support of the Vichy Government would weaken the resistance in France which we were pledged to uphold. We had no evidence for believing that any favours or gestures to the Vichy Government would influence them to come into the war on our side. Some other leader, such as General Giraud,<sup>1</sup> might later obtain more support than General de Gaulle. There were at present no signs of any such rival claimant. In spite of his collaborationist policy Marshal Pétain had kept the loyalty of the generals including General Weygand, and even those known to be anti-German and well-disposed to us shewed no sign of breaking away from Vichy.

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<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 208, note 1.



The Prime Minister, at this time of great anxiety over the military situation, might feel some doubt whether General de Gaulle was making much contribution towards an Allied victory. The American view on the matter was only too plain. Mr. Hull treated the Free French Movement as an obstacle to the efforts of the United States in keeping Vichy from complete subservience to the Germans. The President's lack of imaginative sympathy with the Movement is perhaps more surprising, but Mr. Roosevelt seems to have accepted the views of Mr. Hull and Admiral Leahy. Admiral Leahy, who knew little of France—or of the French language—had a poor opinion of the intrigues at Vichy, but no understanding of the point of honour upon which General de Gaulle rightly laid such importance.<sup>1</sup>

Even the Foreign Office, where more allowance was made for General de Gaulle's point of view than he ever made for any British minister, soldier or official, had almost lost patience with his failure to understand the difficulties he was causing. There were times indeed when in his preoccupation with the dignity and status of France after the defeat of the Axis Powers he seemed to forget that British lives were being expended to bring about this defeat. The Foreign Office considered, as earlier, that one of the causes of trouble with General de Gaulle was the one-sided nature of the agreement of August 7, 1940, which pledged British support, not to a Free French Movement, but to an individual, while General de Gaulle was not committed in writing to any obligations towards the British Government. The desirable course would be to give real powers of decision and execution to the French National Committee. On the other hand the Committee consisted of General de Gaulle's nominees, and was purely advisory, so that in dealing with it we should actually be dealing, as before, with General de Gaulle himself. There were no outstanding figures who could be brought in to strengthen the Committee, and, even if such were to be found, the result might be only to make the Committee a battleground of factions. Hence all we could do was to insist that the General should conform to the broad lines of our strategy and foreign policy.

After the trouble caused by General de Gaulle over St. Pierre and Miquelon, a personal dispute broke out between him and Admiral Muselier.<sup>2</sup> This dispute—in which neither party was without blame—ended in Admiral Muselier resigning from the Free French Movement.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Neither the President nor Admiral Leahy seems to have paid attention to a comment made to the Admiral by M. Herriot in May, 1942, that he (M. Herriot) 'and his followers did not believe that de Gaulle or his Movement had committed any offence against France, but, on the contrary, were fighting for French survival and French ideals.' Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 90-1.

<sup>2</sup> There had been earlier disputes, and an open breach had been averted in September, 1941, only by British intervention.

<sup>3</sup> Admiral Muselier rejoined the Movement after the agreement between the French National Committee and General Giraud in 1943.

There followed an even more serious crisis over Madagascar. A British plan to occupy Madagascar had been under consideration since the entry of Japan into the war. The strategic importance of the island was obvious, and the French authorities, who had accepted the Vichy Government, could not be trusted to resist Japanese demands. They were already suspected of allowing Japanese submarines to use the port of Diego Suarez. The Foreign Office did not think, after the return of Laval to power, that it was desirable to postpone the operation in order to avoid the risk of further French concessions to the Germans. The United States Government approved of it. The President indeed proposed to tell the Vichy Ambassador in Washington that, if necessary, American ships would use Madagascar 'in the common cause of the civilised peoples.'

The first British landings were made on May 5. Diego Suarez was occupied three days later, but the French had orders from Vichy to continue their resistance. The governor-general refused an offer that, if the French administrative staff would cooperate with the United Nations, they would be continued in office, and would not be required to cooperate in the war with those parts of the Empire which were still fighting. General de Gaulle, who had suggested earlier that the Free French should occupy Madagascar, was dismayed and angry at the fact that the expedition had been planned and carried out without his knowledge and participation. He was willing, however, to accept the British answer that we had thought it undesirable for Frenchmen to fight against Frenchmen, but he protested to Mr. Eden on May 11 at the offer to the governor, and was still more indignant at a communiqué issued by the United States that the island would be restored to France (i.e. Vichy) if its occupation were no longer essential to the United Nations. General de Gaulle said to Mr. Eden that he was unwilling to approve of any British operation on French territory conducted without reference to the Free French authorities.<sup>1</sup> An agreement was reached which satisfied General de Gaulle, or at all events was accepted by him, and a joint statement by the British Government and the Free French explained that the purpose of the occupation of Diego Suarez was to deny the use of the place to the enemy, and that the British Government intended the French National Committee to take 'due part in the administration of the liberated French territory.' Here the matter remained for some time while the British military authorities again tried unsuccessfully to come to an understanding with the governor. Finally, the War Cabinet decided in mid-August to complete the occupation by

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden said that he could not understand General de Gaulle's attitude. He assumed that the General would rather have the British than the Japanese in the island.

turning out the Vichy representatives.<sup>1</sup> The opposition was slight, but the governor-general did not surrender until November 5. From the point of view of relations with General de Gaulle, the delay had certain advantages, since another and more serious crisis had arisen with the General over Syria and the Lebanon.

For a short time before this new crisis there was an interlude of relative calm in the relations between General de Gaulle and the British Government. General de Gaulle saw the Prime Minister on June 10. The Prime Minister explained that we had not asked the Free French to join in the expedition to Madagascar because, rightly or wrongly, we had thought that we should meet with less resistance if we acted alone; we also had to consider American views. General de Gaulle hinted at British plans for expeditions to Dakar or the bend of the Niger and for coming to terms with the Vichy authorities in these areas. Mr. Churchill assured General de Gaulle once again that we had no designs on the French Empire. General de Gaulle accepted these assurances, and agreed that, in general, British policy was well disposed to the Free French, but he complained about the attitude of the United States.<sup>2</sup>

General de Gaulle's suspicions of Allied plans for further 'bargains' with Vichy were not due only to the British (and, still more, American) statements about Madagascar. He was both angry and perplexed at the refusal of the British Government at this time to allow him to leave England. He had asked in April for an air passage to Cairo. The Foreign Office considered that we could not reasonably prevent him from visiting the territories administered by the French Committee, although he was likely to cause as much trouble as on his previous visit. The Prime Minister, however, thought that it would be most dangerous to risk the chance of further statements by General de Gaulle attacking British policy. Mr. Eden raised the question again on May 27, but the Prime Minister still refused to agree. Mr. Eden told the War Cabinet on June 2 that he would try to persuade General de Gaulle to stay in England, but that he did not think it wise to forbid him to go abroad if he insisted on doing so. The Prime Minister repeated his previous view, and for the time General de Gaulle was occupied in matters affecting his committee. Even so, he caused a minor crisis by telegraphing his suspicions about British and American designs to General Catroux

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office recommended that the French National Committee should be told of the new operations a few hours before they were carried out.

<sup>2</sup> General de Gaulle said that on the celebration of Memorial Day the United States Government had invited the Vichy service attachés but not the Free French. At his conversation with Mr. Eden on May 11 General de Gaulle had spoken bitterly about the treatment of the Free French by the United States authorities.

in Syria and M. Eboué<sup>1</sup> and General Leclerc in French Equatorial Africa. The Secretary of State thought it necessary to protest to General de Gaulle about these messages. The General told him on June 13 that he had been disquieted by a number of reports which had reached him, and that he had mentioned these reports to the British representative with the French National Committee, but had received no satisfactory answer. After seeing the Prime Minister on June 10 he had sent reassuring messages to his representatives. He had very little suspicion of us, but he deeply suspected the Americans. He asked whether Mr. Eden was sure that the Americans were not planning something against Dakar.

In fact at this time the British and United States Governments had been discussing their relations with General de Gaulle. The Foreign Office wanted the United States Government to give the French Committee the degree of recognition already accorded to it by the British Government. Mr. Welles suggested to Lord Halifax on May 10 that it might be better to try to get a new committee in which General de Gaulle would have only military responsibilities. The Secretary of State telegraphed that there was no alternative to General de Gaulle. The chances of men like M. Herriot leaving France were very slight, and nothing was to be expected from the attempts of certain Frenchmen in America—e.g. M. Chautemps—to form a 'middle' movement of time-servers who thought that Marshal Pétain was doing his best. The Foreign Office arguments had some effect on the State Department. Mr. Hull gave Lord Halifax an *aide-mémoire* on June 11 setting out the terms upon which the United States Government proposed to give official recognition to General de Gaulle and the French National Committee. Mr. Eden suggested

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<sup>1</sup> M. Eboué, whom General de Gaulle had appointed governor of French Equatorial Africa, was one of the most remarkable figures among the supporters of the Free French Movement. M. Eboué was born in French Guiana, but was of African descent. General de Gaulle's telegram to M. Eboué and General Leclerc brought from them an impressive defence of the attitude taken up by the General himself in his dealings with the British Government. They told Mr. Parr, British Consul-General at Brazzaville, that in joining the Free French Movement they were pledged to continue the war and to restore their country. They could not fulfil this second pledge if they allowed any diminution of the status of France before the world. If General de Gaulle should consider that our attitude prevented him from carrying out this pledge, and should therefore withdraw his collaboration, they would accept his decision not merely out of loyalty to their chief, but with full endorsement of his reasons. If we excluded the Free French from our plans dealing with the status and administration of French territories, we should be depriving the Movement of all meaning, and making it clear to the French people that General de Gaulle and his followers would have been wiser not to have remained faithful to the engagements of France, but to have adopted the *attentisme* which our attitude in the case of Madagascar and the French West Indies\* seemed to justify.

\* The relations between the United States and the Vichy authorities in the French West Indies were governed, after the collapse of France, by a semi-official arrangement with Admiral Robert, the French High Commissioner in the islands. The United States Government had protested strongly against the permission given by Admiral Robert in February, 1942, to a German submarine to call at Martinique apparently to land a wounded officer.

some changes which he thought would make the terms more satisfactory to General de Gaulle. At Mr. Hull's wish, Mr. Eden communicated the text to General de Gaulle on June 29. General de Gaulle accepted it, apparently with considerable satisfaction. The text was published on July 9.<sup>1</sup>

General de Gaulle appears to have asked the Prime Minister on June 10 for his agreement to a change in the name of his Movement from 'La France Libre' to 'La France Combattante.' According to the French record of the conversation, Mr. Churchill said to General de Gaulle that he had intentionally used the term 'Fighting French' in a speech in the House of Commons. General de Gaulle wanted the change mainly because the term 'Free France' did not shew that he had anything to do with the forces of resistance in Metropolitan France. The Foreign Office thought that General de Gaulle must be the best judge in the matter, though they pointed out that the Vichy Government had been careful to avoid the term 'Free Frenchmen', since they could not bring Frenchmen to trial merely because they called themselves 'free'.<sup>2</sup> The change in terminology involved a new definition of the French National Committee. M. Dejean, French National Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, suggested a formula describing the Committee as having 'sole competence' to represent French interests. The Foreign Office regarded this claim as too wide, since it might be taken to imply recognition of the Committee as the government of France. In the formula as finally agreed General de Gaulle's name no longer appeared; the Movement was described as one of Frenchmen collaborating with the United Nations. The new statement recognised this Movement for the first time as a symbol of French resistance in general, whether in France or elsewhere. The new formula was announced on July 14. General de Gaulle left England at the end of July for his much postponed visit to the Free French territories in the Levant and Africa.

(v)

*Controversy with General de Gaulle over Syria and the Lebanon, July-November, 1942.*

The situation in the two Levant States was bound to be difficult. In view of the strategic importance of the two States, British operational

<sup>1</sup> On July 25 General Marshall, while in London, called on General de Gaulle, and thereby implied that the Americans were treating him as an ally.

<sup>2</sup> The Vichy Government used the words 'Gaulliste' and 'Gaullisme' and incidentally did General de Gaulle a considerable service by associating his name with French resistance.

control was necessary. This control extended, inevitably, to political and economic matters. On the political side the maintenance of public order depended upon a satisfactory relationship between the French and the two local governments; the implementation of the French promise of independence was also important because Arab opinion generally regarded it as a test of British as well as French sincerity.<sup>1</sup> The problem of supplies—especially of wheat—had to be considered in relation to the Middle East as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

General de Gaulle and the majority of French officials failed to understand either the policy of the British Government or the increasing emotional strength of Arab and Levantine nationalism. The French argued, and, at times with justification, that, in spite of the official statements made in London, the British representatives in the Levant States were undermining French authority and encouraging local opposition. In any case the Free French agreed with their Vichy predecessors in regarding as unnecessary or unworkable concessions to local opinion which in the British view were essential. The stubborn adherence of the Free French to the claims which Vichy had upheld added to the tension between them and the local population. This increase in tension brought more British pressure on General de Gaulle and the French Committee to fulfil their promises, and, as a consequence, more French anger at British interference. Thus the situation locally was one of continual bickering and, at the highest levels of authority, a series of crises. Furthermore, in the view of the Foreign Office, the relations between British and French were unnecessarily strained owing to the strong personality of Sir E. Spears, who was sent as head of the British Mission to Syria and the Lebanon in July, 1941, and became in February, 1942, the first British Minister to the two Republics and head of the Mission to the Free French in these territories. The Free French authorities regarded him as carrying out in fact—whatever his instructions might be—a deliberate policy with the aim of substituting British for French influence in the Levant. The Foreign Office realised the difficulties of Sir E. Spears' position, and gave

<sup>1</sup> On September 27, 1941, General Catroux formally proclaimed Syrian independence in a declaration that the country should henceforward enjoy all the prerogatives of a sovereign state, subject only to the restrictions caused by the existence of a state of war. Two months later General Catroux issued a similar declaration with regard to the Lebanon. The British Government, on October 28 and December 27, respectively, recognised the independence of the two Republics as defined in General Catroux's declarations.

<sup>2</sup> During the winter of 1941-2 there was a serious shortage of wheat in Syria, largely owing to hoarding. The British authorities arranged for the import of about 100,000 tons, and in order to check hoarding, suggested that the British military forces should take over responsibility for the collection and distribution of grain. General Catroux refused this proposal, but agreed in May, 1942, to the establishment of a joint Office des Céréales Panifiables. The staff of the office had to work in all areas of the two States: the French, however, tended to regard the British members as agents spreading pro-British and anti-French propaganda.



him their support, but they felt increasing concern at the way in which he interpreted his instructions.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of General de Gaulle's arrival in Syria the French had taken neither of the two main steps regarded as necessary by the Foreign Office—the announcement of elections and the transfer of as much as possible of the administration to the local governments. The relations between General Catroux and Sir E. Spears were most unsatisfactory, and the majority of the local politicians were as suspicious of the intentions of the French as the latter were suspicious of the intentions of the British Government.

General de Gaulle did not make matters easier. The Syrian and Lebanese politicians objected to his attempts to increase French influence and his refusal of administrative concessions. He began his attacks on British policy in the Middle East by an extremely curt treatment of Mr. Casey, Minister of State in Cairo.<sup>2</sup> He complained to the United States Consul-General at Beirut about British interference, and at the same time caused disquiet in the State Department about his own attitude on the question of elections; he also threatened that, unless matters were changed to his satisfaction, there would be an end to all collaboration with the British.

On August 17 M. Dejean left at the Foreign Office a long telegram of complaint from General de Gaulle to the Prime Minister that the British representatives in Syria and the Lebanon were not observing the Anglo-French agreement about the two States. M. Dejean had been instructed to speak to Mr. Eden on the lines of the telegram, but was unwilling to do so because he thought the telegram ill-advised.<sup>3</sup> After consulting Mr. Eden, as well as Mr. Casey and Sir E. Spears, over a draft text, the Prime Minister replied on August 22 with an assurance that we were not trying to undermine the French position in the two States. Our principal concern was to ensure that no policy was adopted which might risk military security; we therefore expected to be consulted beforehand on major political developments. We were also interested as guarantors of General Catroux's declaration of June 8, 1941.

General de Gaulle was not satisfied with the reply. Mr. Winant<sup>4</sup> told Mr. Eden on August 25 that the General had said, apparently to the United States Consul-General at Beirut, that if he did not obtain satisfaction about the activities of British agents in the Levant,

<sup>1</sup> Before the arrival of General de Gaulle in Syria, Mr. Eden sent a telegram of warning to Sir E. Spears about the importance of maintaining good relations with General Catroux. The State Department, on reports received from the United States Consul-General at Beirut, also did not think that Sir E. Spears was improving a difficult situation.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. R. G. Casey had been appointed in March, 1942, to succeed Mr. Lyttelton as Minister of State. He arrived in Cairo in May, 1942. Mr. Casey had been Australian Minister in Washington.

<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister had just returned to Cairo from his visit to Moscow.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Winant succeeded Mr. Kennedy as U.S. Ambassador in March, 1941.



he would have to ask the British to leave his territory; if they refused to leave, he would force them out.<sup>1</sup>

General de Gaulle telegraphed on August 24 that he regarded the Prime Minister's reply as unsatisfactory. He repeated his earlier charge about the political 'interventions' of British representatives, and maintained that these 'interventions' were incompatible with the British engagements. At the end of August, after Mr. Casey had made further attempts to get General de Gaulle to come to Cairo for a discussion, the Prime Minister asked General de Gaulle to return to London. General de Gaulle, however, did not return for three weeks. On September 5 he challenged the British Government on the command of Allied forces in Syria and the Lebanon. He claimed that the French outnumbered the British forces and that the Allied command should therefore be in French hands. The Foreign Office thought that he had put forward this claim for political reasons; in any case the facts were not as he had stated.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had a meeting with General de Gaulle on September 30. Before this meeting the Foreign Office drew up a memorandum pointing out that we must insist upon the Fighting French carrying out their promises to Syria and the Lebanon, and that the most convincing step would be the announcement that elections would be held within a specified time. If this were not possible, something else must be done, e.g. the transfer to the two States of the so-called 'Funds of Common Interest'.<sup>2</sup> They also thought that a change was desirable in the British representation, either independently or in combination with the replacement of General Catroux,<sup>3</sup> and that we should reaffirm the understanding in the Lyttelton-de Gaulle agreements which were intended to govern our relations with the Fighting French in the Levant.

The meeting with General de Gaulle ended in something near to a breach of relations. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden argued in favour of the holding of elections, and refused to agree to any transfer of the military command. General de Gaulle said that the French would agree to consultation, but that they could not accept what he called British demands for a preponderant position, and that the difficulty lay in the behaviour of the local British representatives. Mr. Churchill pointed out that, with the situation such as it was in

<sup>1</sup> The British Government had to consider at this time the possibility of cutting off the monthly payments of £500,000 to £600,000 to the Fighting French for their administration and troops in the Levant States. They decided against taking this step after General de Gaulle had agreed to return to London.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the proceeds of taxes common to both States, and hitherto administered by the French.

<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister thought it undesirable to make any change. He suggested that Sir E. Spears and General Catroux should be told that they must get on with each other, and that, if either had to go, both would go.

Syria, we did not wish to risk similar difficulties elsewhere, e.g. in Madagascar. General de Gaulle, while refusing to give way over Syria, insisted that Madagascar should be handed over to the Fighting French. He said that he could not accept any diminution of the position of France anywhere, or the neutralisation of France by the British and their Allies. The Prime Minister told General de Gaulle plainly that the great difficulty lay in working with him. Wherever he went there was trouble. He had not shewn the least wish to assist us, and had himself been the greatest obstacle to effective collaboration between the Americans and ourselves. General de Gaulle answered that he would accept the consequences of his action.

Neither the Prime Minister nor General de Gaulle regarded this unprofitable discussion as a final break. The Foreign Office took the initiative at once in telling M. Dejean that if General de Gaulle had not been so intransigent, a settlement of the Syrian question would not have been impossible. If the Syrian question could be cleared up, we would bring the Fighting French into the administration of Madagascar. M. Dejean gave the Foreign Office on October 5 an *aide-mémoire* setting out three proposals as a basis of negotiations: (i) The Fighting French would agree to a declaration before the end of the year that elections would be held in Syria and the Lebanon by the spring. (ii) They would also abandon the claim to command Allied troops in the Levant. (iii) An Anglo-French committee should be set up in London to deal with matters which could not be settled locally.

Mr. Eden accepted these proposals on October 8. He also suggested an exchange of documents defining the terms of Anglo-French cooperation in the Levant States. This proposal was given up after a failure to agree on a text. For the time, however, there was a *détente* in the relations with General de Gaulle. The Prime Minister, in a characteristic gesture, sent him a friendly message on October 29, and Mr. Eden told him on November 6<sup>1</sup> that, if he wished, we would make a public statement that General Legentilhomme had been chosen by the French as High Commissioner for Madagascar. General de Gaulle wanted at first to delay any statement until all the negotiations had been completed, but he agreed to an earlier announcement when the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden gave him the news of the North African expedition.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. on the day after the surrender of the Vichy governor-general.

## CHAPTER VI

The Western and Eastern Mediterranean from the collapse of France to the German attack on the U.S.S.R.

(i)

*Spanish 'non-belligerency' from the outbreak of war to the summer of 1941.*

AFTER the collapse of France and the entry of Italy into the war, the attitude of Spain and Turkey was of the greatest importance to the British position in the Mediterranean. For the first seven months of the war, the danger of Spanish participation on the German side had not been great. General Franco wanted an Allied defeat, or at all events, did not want a defeat of the Fascist dictators; he would also have welcomed a chance of increasing his domestic prestige by the annexation of Gibraltar and by gains in the Mediterranean at the expense of France. On the other hand he had no interest in helping to bring about an overwhelming German victory, still less a victory in which Italy would put forward large claims in the Mediterranean. In any case, General Franco knew that Spain had not the means to fight a war and that Germany could not provide them. The Spanish people depended on imports of wheat and oil which could be cut off by the Allies.<sup>1</sup> The Allies could also seize the Spanish islands in the Atlantic and attack Spanish Morocco even if they did not invade Spain and overthrow General Franco's Government.

As long, therefore, as Italy remained neutral, and the Germans were not winning great victories, General Franco was likely to maintain the neutrality of Spain. After the German invasion of Norway the situation was more doubtful. General Franco was not inclined to alter Spanish policy, but the Germans might employ their methods of infiltration and disguised entry in order to alter it for him. Even so, and in spite of the pro-Axis views of the Falange party, supported by Senor Suñer, General Franco's brother-in-law, there was no change in official policy. Colonel Beigbeder, Spanish Foreign Minister, was known to support a policy of neutrality and to take a good view of the chances of an Allied victory.

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<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations throughout the war turned so much upon the question of supplies that they cannot be described adequately without direct reference to negotiations conducted primarily by representatives of the Ministry for Economic Warfare. See Medlicott, I & II, *passim*.

The collapse of France<sup>1</sup> brought the German armies to the Pyrenees. The Foreign Office did not expect that General Franco would enter the war. It was easier in Spain than in Germany to realise the significance of British sea-power and of the material support promised to Great Britain by the United States. On the other hand, if the Spanish interventionists could not persuade General Franco to declare war, they might put pressure on him to raise demands about Gibraltar or other matters affecting British interests. On June 15 a Spanish force occupied Tangier. This occupation meant little in itself since the British and French Governments had agreed that, in the event of an Italian declaration of war, they would invite Spain to occupy the place.<sup>2</sup> We could not, however, agree to discuss the question of Gibraltar during the war.

The Spanish Government made no demands during the critical days of the collapse of France. General Franco repeated to Sir S. Hoare on June 22 earlier assurances of non-belligerency and shewed that what he mainly wanted was an end to the war and thereby a means of escape from his own economic difficulties. Nearly a month later Sir S. Hoare telegraphed a report (which he thought reliable) that Mussolini had appealed in somewhat threatening terms to General Franco to enter the war. Three days later Sir S. Hoare telegraphed that General Franco had answered that Spain was not in a position to change her policy.

During the next two months the balance in Spain between interventionists and non-interventionists remained precarious. Towards the end of September it seemed possible that the Germans might make a move into Spain if they had to give up for the time their plan of an invasion of Great Britain. The Foreign Office thought it desirable to issue a statement assuring the Spanish people of economic support if the Spanish Government remained relatively independent of the Axis. Before this statement was issued Senor Suñer went to Berlin. From information available to the Foreign Office he appeared to be hoping that Hitler would allow Spain to take Oran and French Morocco from a line south of Fez to the Atlantic ocean even if she

<sup>1</sup> When this collapse was imminent the War Cabinet decided to send to Spain as Special Ambassador a Minister of Cabinet rank whose status would enable him to insist on direct access to General Franco. Sir S. Hoare, who was chosen for the purpose, arrived in Madrid on June 1.

<sup>2</sup> Tangier and a neighbouring zone of territory—an enclave in Spanish Morocco—had been neutralised in 1923, though they remained part of the dominions of the Sultan of Morocco. If Italy entered the war against France, the area of hostilities might include the French protectorate of Morocco. Spain would not have allowed an Anglo-French occupation of the neutralised area; hence from the Allied point of view a temporary Spanish occupation was the best solution. On December 1, 1940, the Spanish Government incorporated the international zone in Spanish Morocco. The British Government protested against this unilateral action, and threatened to withdraw their offer of wheat and credits (see below, p. 126) to Spain unless they received assurances safeguarding British rights and interests in the zone. An arrangement was reached after considerable discussion in February, 1941.

did not enter the war. The Germans seemed to have received this proposal coolly, and at the same time to have alarmed Senor Suñer by their plans for a continental *bloc* in which Spanish trade would be largely controlled from Berlin. They also wanted Spain to enter the war, but, again, General Franco refused.

On October 17 Colonel Beigbeder was dismissed, and Senor Suñer took his place as Foreign Minister. This appointment was a defeat for the anti-German party, but it did not bring a change in policy. On October 23 Hitler met General Franco on the Spanish frontier. According to Sir S. Hoare's information, General Franco refused to allow Germany or Italy the use of bases on Spanish territory or a right of passage across it.

The position early in November thus was that an immediate German advance into Spain seemed unlikely, but that Spanish resistance might be weakened by increasing German penetration. In these circumstances the Foreign Office thought that we could either continue our policy of being fairly generous in supplies and thereby providing a counter-attraction in the economic sphere to Germany, or we could refuse supplies and credits except in return for assurances that Spain would remain out of the war. Sir S. Hoare, however, considered that a generous treatment in the matter of supplies need not mean giving up control. We already had assurances of Spanish non-belligerency, and we knew that owing to the failure of the harvest and a shortage of foreign exchange the food situation was critical. The War Cabinet therefore decided to ask for the help of the United States in sending supplies of wheat. The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President on the night of November 23-4 that an American offer of supplies might be decisive. The United States Government were inclined to hold out for a public declaration of non-belligerency by General Franco in return for 100,000 tons of wheat, but they accepted Lord Lothian's view that a private assurance would be enough.

On December 1 Sir S. Hoare was instructed to tell the Spanish Government that, in view of the serious economic distress in Spain, we were prepared to grant an immediate credit up to £2,000,000 and that, 'if the political situation developed favourably,' we might increase the total to £4,000,000 by June, 1941. We would also provide navicerts for wheat imports up to a million tons for the next twelve months. We were making this offer to a Government which had been 'less than friendly' to us, and should withdraw it if Spain gave assistance to our enemies. The only other condition attached to the offer was that full publicity should be given to it in the Spanish press and broadcasts.

In the first week of January, 1941, the Foreign Office received information that Hitler had again asked General Franco to declare

war, and that General Franco had repeated his previous answer that the economic condition of Spain made it impossible for him to do so. Sir S. Hoare reported on January 23 that the Germans had made another demand for right of passage and had again been refused. The situation did not change during the next five months. The Spanish Ambassador in London told Mr. Eden on May 8, 1941, that, as long as Great Britain held Suez, General Franco could stave off German demands, since he could say that it was useless to close one end of the Mediterranean while the other remained open. The Foreign Office also thought that the Germans would not make a move into Spain until they could deal at least with the Western Mediterranean situation as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

(ii)

*Turkish neutrality after the collapse of France: the Italian attack on Greece: attempts to secure Turkish and Yugoslav resistance to a German move into the Balkans.*

With the entry of Italy into the war the Turkish Government claimed that the tripartite treaty with Great Britain and France<sup>2</sup> was no longer valid, since the French could not fulfil their part in the provision of mutual assistance, and that it was also necessary to take account of the protocol that Turkey should not be required to do anything which would involve her in war with the U.S.S.R. The Foreign Office hoped that at least Turkey would break off diplomatic relations with Italy, but after the Franco-German armistice the Turkish Government limited themselves to a declaration that they would remain 'non-belligerent.' Their declaration did not suggest that this non-belligerency was only provisional.

The British Government decided not to ask at this stage for anything more from Turkey. Turkish neutrality was itself of great strategic value. If the Turks gave way to the Axis Powers, or were defeated by them, the way would be open for a German invasion of Syria or an attack on the Suez Canal; the oil supplies of Iraq and Persia, and of the whole Arabian peninsula and the Persian Gulf, might come under enemy control. Moreover there was no chance—there never had been much chance—of creating a Balkan bloc to

<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons likely to make the Germans hesitate about entering Spain was that the British might then occupy the Spanish and Portuguese islands in the Atlantic. See also below, p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 13-14.

resist German attack; if Turkey declared war, she would need equipment which Great Britain could not provide. The Turkish Government were also more immediately afraid of Russia,<sup>1</sup> and, in spite of Sir S. Cripps' suggestion that we might assist in improving Russo-Turkish relations, the Foreign Office had come to the conclusion that Russia would ask so much that an attempt at mediation might well cause embarrassment to both sides.<sup>2</sup>

The Italian attack on Greece, however, raised the question of more positive help from Turkey. On the Italian entry into the war Mussolini had 'reaffirmed' the peaceful intentions of Italy towards Greece. These affirmations obviously had no value, and the Greeks did not believe them. On August 15, 1940, the Greek cruiser *Helle* was sunk by a submarine which was unidentified, but believed—rightly—to be Italian; the Italians also opened a violent press campaign against Greece.

On September 5 Lord Halifax stated in the House of Lords that Great Britain would honour her guarantee to Greece.<sup>3</sup> General Metaxas, the Greek Prime Minister, asked what help we could give. The War Cabinet considered that we could not say more than that the most valuable help we could provide would be to defeat Italy. This purpose would not be served by the dispersal of our forces. We could not therefore undertake to send land or air forces to the Greek mainland, but we should try to prevent an Italian occupation of Crete. In any case Greece could count on our support in the general settlement after the war.

The Italian attack on Greece opened on October 28.<sup>4</sup> The Foreign Office had begun to think that the attack might be postponed until the spring. At first the War Cabinet maintained their view that we could not meet appeals from the Greeks for help in the air, but within a few days there was a change in policy. The Prime Minister considered that, even though the diversion of air forces to Greece would leave us dangerously weak in the Middle East, we ought to give direct help.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore the military situation in Greece turned out very differently from the expectations of the friends as well as the

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen considered that Turkish fears of Russia were genuine, and that M. Molotov had made it clear that the Soviet Government would disapprove of the entry of Turkey into the war.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Parl. Deb. 5th Ser., H. of L., vol. 117, cols. 368-9.

<sup>4</sup> The Italian aggression was so little disguised that, after presenting an ultimatum demanding the surrender of certain strategic points, the Italian Minister in Athens was unable to say what these points were.

<sup>5</sup> At this time the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet did not realise the scale of the action which General Wavell intended shortly to take against the Italians in the Western Desert. Mr. Eden, at this time Secretary of State for War, went to Cairo on October 16 for consultation with General Wavell. He came back on November 8 and was then able to explain General Wavell's intentions.



enemies of Greece. At the end of October Sir M. Palaioret, British Minister at Athens, had reported that the British Service attachés thought that, without help from outside, Greece would soon be overrun. After a short withdrawal, however, the Greeks not only held the Italians, but took the offensive against them in southern Albania. On the night of November 11-12 aircraft from H.M.S. *Illustrious* put three Italian battleships and a cruiser out of action for several months. The immediate situation was therefore unexpectedly favourable. On the other hand, apart from the likelihood that their general plan included an eastward advance, the Germans could not allow their ally to be defeated in Greece. Hence, although the *tempo* might be slower, a German move into the Balkans seemed probable, at the latest, in the spring of 1941.<sup>1</sup>

The Turkish Government, under article 3 of the tripartite treaty, were pledged to assist Great Britain and France in their guarantees to Greece and Roumania. Turkey was also bound under the terms of the Balkan pact of 1934 to assist Greece against Bulgaria though not necessarily against Italy. Even if the British Government had regarded Turkish entry into the war at this time as wholly in British interests, the British Government could not have insisted on the fulfilment of the obligations in article 3. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, British Ambassador to Turkey, asked on August 18 whether Turkey would aid Greece in the event of an attack on the latter by Italy. The Turkish answer was non-committal. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen thought that the Turks would not assist Greece, and that, in view of their unpreparedness for war, it was not in our own interest to suggest that they should do much more than break off diplomatic relations with Italy and close the Straits under article 21 of the Montreux Convention. The Chiefs of Staff at this time also inclined to this view. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen was instructed accordingly, though he was also asked to try to get a Turkish statement of warning which might hold back the Italians from attack. The Turkish Government, after much hesitation, agreed to make this statement at the opening of the Turkish National Assembly on October 29. Thus, when the Italians attacked, there had been no statement.

Turkish policy, in the event of a German move into Greece, depended to some extent on the attitude of Yugoslavia. German troops could enter Greece by land only if they crossed Yugoslav or Bulgarian territory. Yugoslavia might possibly resist a German demand for passage. Bulgaria was unlikely to do so. The aim of the Foreign Office therefore was to try to get Turkey and Yugoslavia to make a joint declaration to Bulgaria that they would go to war with her if she admitted German troops. Turkey had already given a

<sup>1</sup> See also below, pp. 144-5.

private warning to Bulgaria, though in somewhat mild and indefinite terms. As the evidence of German penetration into the Balkans became stronger,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill wanted to put more pressure on the Turks, and the Chiefs of Staff now agreed with him that we should try to get Turkey into the war as soon as possible, since otherwise she might give way to Axis pressure.<sup>2</sup>

The Foreign Office, on the other hand, continued to think that Turkey would not enter the war unless Turkish interests were directly and obviously threatened, and that the result of our 'pressure' would only be a demand for armaments which we could not supply. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen doubted whether Turkey would do anything at all if the Germans advanced through Yugoslavia; he did not reckon as more than 70 per cent the chances of Turkish action in the event of a German move through Bulgaria. It might seem obvious in such a case that, if Turkey did not declare war on Bulgaria, she would find herself alone, and the Balkan States would be 'eaten up one by one,' but, as earlier in the year with the Low Countries and Scandinavia, the immediate threat of a German invasion loomed larger than any other consideration. If Great Britain lost the war, early submission to Germany would have been proved the least damaging policy. If Great Britain won the war, British interests would still require her to support Turkey. Moreover, the Turks were aware that their strategic position was of vital interest to Russia. Here again there was a risk that Russia might ask a high price for any protection, but for a long time past Turkey had survived owing to the rivalries of the Great Powers. From the Turkish point of view there was no reason for a more 'heroic' policy, especially when British aid would obviously be on a small scale.

At the end of December, 1940, Sir M. Palairret was instructed to point out to the Greeks the importance of preparing preliminary bases from which a large British air striking force could operate in northern Greece; unless these bases were available we might not be able to send help later to the Greeks. General Metaxas agreed reluctantly, and only 'in principle', to the establishment of a bomber squadron at Salonika. He asked that we should not send it until we had fully considered the consequences of provoking a German attack. Mr. Churchill's view was that this attack was already planned and that all we could do was to try to meet it. There was indeed increasing evidence that the attack would be made soon, possibly in January, 1941. Early in January, when General Wavell had won remarkable successes in the Western Desert, the War Cabinet decided to authorise him to send an air force and a small mechanised force to

<sup>1</sup> King Boris of Bulgaria visited Hitler on November 17.

<sup>2</sup> For the Prime Minister's view of the situation in the last week of November, see Churchill, II, 484.

Salonika. They also thought it desirable to tell the Turkish and Yugoslav Governments of the plan, in the hope of encouraging their cooperation.

It seems curious, in retrospect, that the Prime Minister and the military authorities did not realise earlier the extent to which the Balkan countries had measured British military weakness. The Prince Regent of Yugoslavia described our plan as a 'clumsy move' which would merely bring the Germans into the Balkans. They would get there more quickly than the British forces and would overrun the peninsula in a few weeks. Prince Paul said that Yugoslavia intended to resist the passage of German troops, but that this intention might be changed if we set up a front at Salonika. General Metaxas told General Wavell that we should make our plans secretly, and not land troops until we could bring them in sufficient force for attack as well as defence. General Wavell himself at this time regarded the Salonika proposal as a dangerous half-measure.

The Greek Government repeated their views in a note given to Sir M. Palairret on January 18, 1941. They did not believe that the reinforcements which we could offer would be enough to hold a German attack, especially if, as was likely, the Bulgarians acted with the Germans. They knew of Prince Paul's statement that, if the despatch of British troops to Macedonia brought a German counter-move, Yugoslavia might not refuse a German demand for passage. The Greeks asked, therefore, that a British force should be sent only if German troops crossed the Danube or entered Bulgaria. The Chiefs of Staff did not think that a German advance on Salonika through Yugoslavia could be held; an advance through Bulgaria might be held if the Turks declared war as soon as the Germans invaded Bulgaria, and if British troops had already been established at Salonika. Since both the Greeks and the Yugoslavs objected to an immediate occupation of Salonika, we could do no more than impose a short delay on a German attempt to occupy the whole of Greece.

Within three weeks, however, there was another change of policy. The Germans did not make a move into Greece, but the Greeks became increasingly nervous about German intentions and about their own ability without help to keep back the Italians. General Metaxas died on January 29, 1941. He was succeeded as President of the Council by M. Koryzis, and as Commander-in-Chief by General Papagos. Sir M. Palairret asked M. Koryzis on February 8 whether General Metaxas' statement of January 18 still held good. M. Koryzis made the surprising answer that he had never seen the statement, but on February 9 Sir M. Palairret was given a formal communication that Greek policy—including a resolve to fight to the end—was unchanged. The Greek Government asked whether the British offer remained open on the scale on which it had been made

to General Metaxas. They put this question in order that the British Government might be in a position to judge whether their own and the Greek forces would be sufficient to meet a German attack and to encourage the resistance of Yugoslavia and Turkey. Three days earlier General Wavell's forces had captured Benghazi. It now seemed possible to meet the Greek requirements—put at four British divisions—to assist in holding the Germans. In order to concert plans for using these forces, Mr. Eden and Sir J. Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, left London for the Middle East and the Balkans on February 12.

The decision to concentrate British forces in assistance to Greece had been taken after another failure to get more active support from Turkey. On January 31 the Prime Minister sent a personal message to the President of the Turkish Republic.<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen was instructed, in the event of a favourable answer, to propose that Mr. Eden should go to Ankara for consultation with the Turkish Government. The Turkish reply was that our offer of assistance was too small, and that Turkey would be brought into the war if she admitted British forces in anticipation of a German advance threatening Turkish security.

If, therefore, an attempt were to be made to hold up a German advance, British forces would have to go to Greece. The risks of failure in Greece were considerable, and the strain on British resources great, but these risks had to be taken for moral reasons—our guarantee to Greece—and for political and military reasons—the discredit which would come to us if once again we failed to honour a guarantee with direct help, and the threat to our sea communications and to Turkey if the Germans occupied the Greek ports and islands.

(iii)

*Mission of Mr. Eden and General Dill: British decision to send an expeditionary force to Greece: German occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece.*

Mr. Eden and General Dill were delayed by bad weather and did not reach Cairo until February 19. They went to Athens on February 22 and to Ankara on February 26; they returned to Athens on March 2 and left for Cairo on March 6. Mr. Eden saw the Turkish Foreign Minister in Cyprus on March 18–19. He left Cairo for Malta and London on March 25, but went back to Athens from Malta with

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 30–32.

General Dill on March 27.<sup>1</sup> His instructions<sup>2</sup> were to make the best arrangements possible for helping Greece. In summing up the position to the War Cabinet on February 20 the Prime Minister thought that we might not be able to keep the Germans out of Salonika. If the Greeks made terms—and we should not blame them for doing so—we should try to hold the islands. Mr. Churchill sent a telegram to Mr. Eden and General Dill on February 20 telling them again that they should not feel bound to a Greek enterprise if they thought it would 'only be another Norwegian fiasco'.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Eden's telegrams from Cairo were not at all pessimistic over the chances of halting a German advance, though we might not be able to hold Salonika. In Athens Mr. Eden and General Dill held conversations with the King of the Hellenes, M. Koryzis, and General Papagos. The Greeks reaffirmed their determination to go on fighting, if necessary, alone. They were still afraid that, while the attitude of Turkey and Yugoslavia remained uncertain, British help on an insufficient scale would merely provoke a German attack which the combined Anglo-Greek forces would be unable to meet. Mr. Eden explained that if we waited, we should be too late. Finally, after long military discussions, the Greeks accepted the British offer on February 23.<sup>4</sup>

The War Cabinet on February 24 approved the offer made to the Greeks, and the decision implied in it to open a new front in Greece. The decision was not an easy one, though the strategic arguments had already been discussed and the chances and consequences of failure considered. There were, however, two new factors in the discussion. The British military authorities in the Middle East, while realising the importance of getting the cooperation of Yugoslavia and Turkey, thought that even without them there was a good chance of holding a line in Greece.<sup>5</sup> The Chiefs of Staff, on the other hand, considered that without the support of one or the other we were unlikely to be able to save Greece. The Foreign Office view was that our action in Greece might have some influence on Turkey but that there was little hope of Yugoslavia holding out against German demands.

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible, in writing an account of a mission which was undertaken jointly by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, to separate the military from the diplomatic negotiations. This account concentrates as far as possible on the diplomatic aspects. For the military aspects, see *Grand Strategy*, II, ch. XIX, and I. S. O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, (Vol. II), History of the Second World War. U.K. Military Series.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of these instructions, see Churchill, III, 60–62.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this telegram, see *ib.*, p. 63. Mr. Churchill telegraphed to Mr. Eden again on March 1 that if he felt that there was 'not even a reasonable hope' of success, he had authority to liberate both the Greek and the British Governments from any bargain. For the text of this telegram, see Churchill, *ib.*, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of Mr. Eden's summary of the discussions, see *ib.*, pp. 66–8.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. the so-called Aliakhmon line from the Yugoslav border to the Aegean north of Mt. Olympus. The line did not include Salonika.

The second new factor was that two of the four divisions which General Wavell proposed to send to Greece were from Australia, and one from New Zealand. Mr. Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister, was present at the War Cabinet meeting on February 24, and the two Dominion Governments gave their consent under certain conditions to the use of their troops.<sup>1</sup> The War Cabinet discussed the matter again on February 27.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister was influenced by the views of the Middle Eastern Command, but these views were very soon shown to be over-hopeful. On their visit to Ankara Mr. Eden and General Dill found that the Turks would not commit themselves to a declaration of war even when the Germans invaded Bulgaria. They would defend themselves if attacked, but wanted to wait until they were better equipped before taking action.<sup>3</sup> The Yugoslav attitude was not more satisfactory. Mr. Eden had telegraphed to Prince Paul from Athens asking for his views on the dangers resulting from German activities in the Balkans. The answer—sent to Mr. Eden at Ankara—was that Yugoslavia would defend herself against aggression or the passage of foreign troops, but could not yet decide what she would do if Germany attacked Greece through Bulgaria. On March 1 the Germans moved openly into Bulgaria, and on March 2, the President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers left for Vienna to sign the Tripartite Pact.<sup>4</sup>

On his return to Athens on March 2, Mr. Eden again tried to persuade the Yugoslav Government to resist the Germans. He had

<sup>1</sup> The risks of the enterprise were also explained to General Sikorski. It should be recorded that none the less he agreed to the employment of the Polish brigade although it was at the time the only Polish force in being. The Prime Minister asked Mr. Eden on March 14 to tell General Wavell to keep this latter fact in mind. Churchill, III, 95-6.

<sup>2</sup> A hopeful view of the prospects of an expedition to Greece was also taken at this time by Colonel Donovan, an American officer who had been making a tour of the Balkan capitals and Middle East as the personal emissary of Colonel Knox, United States Secretary of the Navy. Colonel Donovan, whose views were known to the British authorities, thought that the Balkans offered a field of operations in which Great Britain could defeat the German armies, but only on condition that Turkey, Yugoslavia and, if possible, Bulgaria cooperated with the Anglo-Greek forces. Colonel Donovan suggested that President Roosevelt should use his influence to persuade the Balkan States to agree to this common action. Colonel Donovan's report thus strengthened the argument that the risks of the expedition to Greece were worth taking, and that, conversely, a refusal to help Greece might have a serious effect on the American attitude to Great Britain. Mr. Roosevelt sent personal messages to the Turkish President and the Prince Regent of Yugoslavia on February 14.

<sup>3</sup> On February 17 the Turkish and Bulgarian Governments issued a declaration reaffirming their existing pact of friendship.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 168. The British Government broke off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria on March 5. Mr. Rendel, British Minister to Bulgaria, pointed out to King Boris the grave consequences to Bulgaria of the step which the Bulgarian Government were taking. The King argued that Bulgaria suffered from her geographical position. He said nothing to show that he regretted the policy which he was adopting. At a final interview on March 5 with Mr. Rendel the President of the Council said that the Bulgarian Government were well able to look after the independence of the country. Mr. Rendel answered that he took formal note of this statement, and that it might prove to be important to have it on record for a future peace conference that the Bulgarian Prime Minister had assumed full responsibility for the consequences of his policy.



previously suggested that he might go to Yugoslavia, but Prince Paul had been unwilling to arrange a meeting. All that he would now agree to was a secret meeting between a Yugoslav staff officer and British and Greek representatives. Meanwhile on March 4 Prince Paul himself went to Germany.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the unwillingness of the Turks and Yugoslavs to risk provoking Germany even after the Germans were massing in Bulgaria, the Middle Eastern Command still thought it possible to hold up the Germans on the Aliakhmon line. Here also Mr. Eden and General Dill had to report the disquieting news that the Greeks had not carried out a withdrawal of troops from Thrace and Macedonia to this line.

Mr. Eden reported these facts on March 5.<sup>2</sup> The War Cabinet therefore had to decide whether, as Mr. Eden still recommended, to send a British force in circumstances which were now much less favourable. At a meeting on March 5 they came to the conclusion that Mr. Eden should be told of their doubts whether we could save Greece. The War Cabinet wanted a fuller explanation why Generals Dill and Wavell thought that there were any chances of success. The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Eden on the night of March 5-6 giving the views of the War Cabinet.<sup>3</sup>

The War Cabinet met again on the afternoon of March 6. No answer had yet been received from Mr. Eden. Mr. Menzies explained the difficulties from the Australian point of view—i.e. all the new factors added to the hazards of the operation, and no reason had been given why our military advisers in the Middle East thought that it would succeed. At the Prime Minister's suggestion the War Cabinet decided to send another telegram to Mr. Eden in order to make it clear that the War Cabinet were delaying their decision until they had heard from him.

In addition to a short telegram to this effect the Prime Minister sent a longer message<sup>4</sup> to Mr. Eden on the night of March 6-7 in which he said that we ought not to take upon ourselves the responsibility of persuading the Greeks against their better judgment to fight a hopeless battle, although, if they were resolved to fight to the death, we must fight with them. We must, however, be able to tell the Dominion Governments 'faithfully' that we were undertaking this hazard not owing to 'any commitment entered into by a British

<sup>1</sup> The Yugoslav Prime Minister and Foreign Minister had gone to see Hitler on February 14.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the message from Mr. Eden and General Dill, see Churchill, III, 87-8.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the telegram to Mr. Eden on the night of March 5-6, see Churchill, III, 90. The telegram concluded with the words, 'I send you this to prepare your mind for what, in the absence of facts very different from those now before us, will probably be expressed in Cabinet decision tomorrow.'

<sup>4</sup> For the text of these telegrams, see Churchill, III, 91-3.



Cabinet Minister at Athens and signed by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff,' but because Generals Dill and Wavell and the other Commanders-in-Chief were convinced that we had a 'reasonable fighting chance.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Eden telegraphed in the afternoon of March 6 that he had re-examined the question with General Dill and the three Commanders-in-Chief, and that 'despite the heavy commitments and grave risks,' they were unanimously agreed that the decision taken in Athens was right.<sup>2</sup> On the morning of March 7 Mr. Eden sent a longer telegram.<sup>3</sup> He said that there had been no question of 'urging Greece against her better judgment'; the Greeks were determined to fight 'whatever the odds.' He confirmed his earlier statement that General Wavell believed that there was a good chance of holding the enemy. The risks were now greater, but the issues could not be weighed solely in chances of military success. 'No doubt our prestige will suffer if we are ignominiously ejected, but in any event to have fought and suffered in Greece will be less damaging to us than to have left Greece to her fate.'<sup>4</sup>

This second telegram had not been received when the War Cabinet met on March 7. The War Cabinet had to come to their decision on the short telegram of March 6. They found it extremely difficult to judge a situation which was changing rapidly for the worse, and upon which a military decision required local knowledge. They had been told the general views of the Middle East Commanders, but not the detailed arguments which had led these Commanders to believe that the enterprise had a fair chance of success. Indeed the military considerations hitherto brought forward seemed to weigh against the plan. The War Cabinet decided finally to accept the opinion of the Middle East Commanders. They informed the Australian and New Zealand Governments accordingly. These Governments gave their consent, also with considerable misgivings.<sup>5</sup>

During the month after the War Cabinet had decided to send an expeditionary force to Greece, and before the opening of the German

<sup>1</sup> The Australian Government had protested against the signature, without prior consultation with them, of an agreement involving Dominion troops.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this telegram (which did not reach London in time for submission to the War Cabinet on March 6), see Churchill, III, 92.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the larger part of this telegram, see Churchill, *ib.*, pp. 93-4.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Eden, with the Prime Minister's approval, had invited Field-Marshal Smuts to Cairo in order to take part in the discussions. Field-Marshal Smuts approved of the decision to send the expedition.

<sup>5</sup> The question whether the consultation with the Australian and New Zealand Commanders in the Middle East had been adequate falls outside the scope of this History. The decision of the Australian and New Zealand Governments was the more striking because at this time the entry of Japan into the war seemed likely and the Dominion forces might well be needed for the local defence of their own countries.

attack on April 6, the main diplomatic struggle was over Yugoslavia. Popular opinion at least among the Serbs was anti-German, and Prince Paul himself seemed to be sincere in wishing for a British victory, but his military advisers told him that Yugoslavia could not hold out for more than a week against the Germans, and that, even with British help, the Greeks could not resist much longer. Mr. Eden tried to get Russian encouragement for the Yugoslavs. He asked Sir S. Cripps on March 21 to speak to M. Vyshinsky.<sup>1</sup> Although M. Vyshinsky received Sir S. Cripps' suggestion 'very seriously,' he said on the night of March 22-3 that it was too late. Mr. Campbell, British Minister in Belgrade, had in fact heard on March 20 that the Yugoslav Government had agreed to sign the Tripartite Pact under certain conditions. The signature took place on March 25.<sup>2</sup>

On March 26 Mr. Churchill sent a message to Mr. Campbell telling him to keep in close touch with Prince Paul and his Ministers. He added, at the suggestion of the Foreign Office, that Mr. Campbell should not 'neglect any alternative to which we may have to resort' if we found that the present Government had 'gone beyond recall.'<sup>3</sup> Mr. Campbell himself had reported the possibility of a military *coup d'état* against the policy of surrender to Germany. He telegraphed that, if the army were to be won over, we must offer them military equipment, and, if possible, make a naval demonstration in the Adriatic as evidence that we could maintain communications by sea with the Yugoslav army. Mr. Eden felt unable to authorise more than a guarded reply to the question of material assistance; we had already pointed out to the Yugoslavs that they would get ample equipment as booty if they attacked the Italians in Albania. Mr. Eden also thought that we ought not to break off relations with the Government, but that we could try openly to increase popular opposition to the signature of the pact with Germany.

Mr. Eden and General Dill left Cairo for London on March 25. They were delayed at Malta by bad weather, and had news there on March 27 of a *coup d'état* at Belgrade. King Peter had dismissed the three Regents and invited General Simovic, formerly Chief of the Air Staff, to form a new government. Mr. Eden and General Dill then flew back to Athens. Mr. Churchill had already authorised Mr. Campbell to say that we would recognise the new government if they would help Greece and denounce the Tripartite Pact. Mr. Eden suggested a meeting with Yugoslav representatives in order to

<sup>1</sup> See p. 144, n. 2. The Yugoslav Government had sent a special envoy secretly to Moscow some weeks earlier.

<sup>2</sup> The Yugoslav Prime Minister and Foreign Minister paid another visit to Hitler on March 14. On March 22 Mr. Campbell delivered a personal message to Prince Paul from His Majesty the King, and a message from Mr. Churchill to the Yugoslav Prime Minister. For the text of Mr. Churchill's message, see Churchill, III, 141-2.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 142.

concert resistance, but the character and purpose of the Yugoslav revolution were not as simple as British observers outside Yugoslavia were inclined to think. The *coup* was a protest, not only against the alignment of the country with Germany, but against the dictatorial methods of the fallen Government and its predecessors. It was not even certain that there would be a complete reversal of foreign policy. General Simovic told Mr. Campbell on March 29 that his policy<sup>1</sup> towards Germany was to gain time, and that he did not want us to force him into any move likely to provoke Hitler. He did not wish Mr. Eden to come to Belgrade, but agreed to a secret visit by General Dill. Mr. Campbell heard on April 3 that the Yugoslav Government had accepted an Italian offer of mediation. The Italians had then made an excuse to postpone the arrival of a Yugoslav envoy. If the offer were renewed, the Yugoslav Government would accept it since it was in their interest, and, as they thought, in the British interest, that the Germans should not take further action in the Balkans. Later on April 3 General Simovic said that the new Yugoslav Foreign Minister might go to Germany.

Meanwhile Mr. Eden had made yet another attempt to get some positive move by Turkey. He had seen M. Sarajoglu in Cyprus on March 18-19, and, with difficulty, had persuaded him to agree to send a message to the Yugoslav Government suggesting an exchange of views in the event of a German attack on Greece. Even this message had not been sent. After the Yugoslav *coup d'état*, Mr. Eden asked Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen to point out that the time was favourable for the message. The Prime Minister also sent a personal message to the Turkish President that there was now a chance to organise a common front so strong that Germany would hardly dare to invade the Balkans.<sup>2</sup>

Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen was not hopeful of any change in Turkish policy, and thought that we ought not to give the impression that we were pushing Turkey into war. The Prime Minister, however, sent Mr. Eden his own appreciation of the general position in the Balkans, and authorised him in the light of it to deal as he thought fit with the Turkish Government.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Eden instructed Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen on the lines of the Prime Minister's message. He did not think that the Turks would take the view that we were pushing them into war; we accepted their argument that their armies must remain on the defensive, but we had never said that

<sup>1</sup> One important factor was the need to conciliate the Croats and Slovenes. For this reason, in spite of the lesson which they might have learned from the fate of the Poles a year and a half earlier, the Yugoslavs gravely weakened their military chances of resistance by dispersing their forces on their frontier. A withdrawal to the mountainous area would have left Croatia and Slovenia open to invasion.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 149.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 149-51.

in consequence Turkey should refrain from political action. The Turkish Government, however, refused to do anything.

The Germans did not allow General Simovic the time which he had hoped to gain. They attacked Yugoslavia and Greece without warning in the early hours of April 6. Within eleven days the Yugoslav army was forced to capitulate. On April 20, the Germans who had entered Salonika on April 8, reached Thermopylae—the last line of defence upon which the Allies could stand. On April 21 M. Tsouderos, the new Greek Prime Minister—M. Koryzis had committed suicide on April 18<sup>1</sup>—made a formal communication to Sir M. Palairret that the Greek army had not the means to continue their resistance, and that without Greek cooperation the British forces could not hold their positions for more than a few days. Hence the Greek Government was obliged to say that further sacrifice of the British Expeditionary Force would be in vain, and that its withdrawal in time to escape destruction was necessary in the common interest of the Allies.

The King of the Hellenes was anxious, if possible, to remain on Greek territory. He went with his Government to Crete on April 23, and, a month later, with considerable difficulty, escaped to Cairo. King Peter of Yugoslavia and his Government had also gone to Cairo after the Yugoslav collapse.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the day before his death M. Koryzis had told Sir M. Palairret that the Greek Government wished to do as much for us as for their own troops. They were in fact ready to prejudice their own troops to benefit us, since they regarded themselves as our hosts.

<sup>2</sup> The British Government had given a pledge of alliance to Yugoslavia at the opening of the German attack. They were, however, unable to provide any material help. Mr. Churchill had recommended on April 13 that King Peter and his Ministers should not leave Yugoslavia, but go into the mountains and carry on a guerrilla warfare. See Churchill, III, 197–8.

## CHAPTER VII

### Anglo-Russian relations from the opening of the German offensive in the West to the entry of the United States into the war

#### (i)

*Anglo-Russian relations from the opening of the German offensive in the west to the end of 1940: the question of the Baltic States: Sir S. Cripps' unsuccessful approaches to the Soviet Government.*

DURING the six weeks between the end of March and the opening of the German offensive in the west the British and Soviet Governments exchanged notes about the possibility of a trade agreement.<sup>1</sup> They had made little progress by the middle of May. At that time the Foreign Office thought that the best plan might be to try for a barter arrangement outside the field of our contraband control. In view of the military situation it was most desirable to avoid protracted negotiations and delays for which the Soviet Government would hold us responsible. The War Cabinet therefore invited Sir S. Cripps to go on a special 'exploratory' mission to Moscow. Sir S. Cripps considered that we had mis-handled the negotiations and that we could get a trade agreement, and possibly also a political agreement with the Soviet Government. There was a little delay before Sir S. Cripps left London. The Foreign Office thought the Soviet Government might refuse to receive a special mission unless at the same time we announced that we were shortly sending a permanent ambassador again to Moscow. This announcement did not placate the Soviet Government, though M. Maisky had seemed pleased with it. Sir S. Cripps was therefore appointed as Ambassador in succession to Sir W. Seeds.<sup>2</sup>

Sir S. Cripps arrived in Moscow on June 12, 1940, at a time when the Soviet Government were faced with an unexpected situation. One of the main assumptions behind their policy had disappeared with the collapse of the Allied front in western Europe. They had thought that by their agreement with Germany they had extricated themselves from participation in a war in which they might have

<sup>1</sup> For these negotiations, see Medlicott, I, cc. 9. and 20.

<sup>2</sup> In accepting Sir S. Cripps as a 'regular' ambassador, M. Molotov told the British chargé d'affaires that, if he (Sir S. Cripps) had the full confidence of the British Government, his political views were of no interest to the Soviet Government.

been left to fight the German armies without much help from Great Britain and France. They had not reckoned upon an early and complete collapse of the French—though their own propaganda had played no small part in weakening French morale—or the enforced withdrawal of British forces from the western front and a possible invasion of Great Britain. They now had to take into account the chances that Germany might make demands on them to which they could not safely agree. If they refused these demands, they might have to fight, at all events, for a long time, the single-front war on land which they had manoeuvred to avoid.

They might indeed have declared war immediately in the hope of saving what remained of the French armies and of striking at the Germans before the latter could turn in strength to the east. The Russians, however, were not ready for war, and the French defeat had gone so far that Russian intervention could not have saved France (though it might have prevented a political surrender), while it would have committed the U.S.S.R. to the single-front war in Europe, with the risk of a Japanese attack in the Far East. If therefore the Russians would not fight Germany, they could either increase their help to her at a price, or merely try by delaying tactics to gain time and meanwhile do what they could to avoid using their own resources to strengthen the German war machine. In neither case could they risk German displeasure by shewing themselves more forthcoming to Great Britain.

As the Foreign Office expected, the Russians took the opportunity, while Hitler was still occupied in the west, to strengthen their own military position. Between June 14 and 17 they compelled Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to change their governments and to allow the entry of Soviet troops. On June 26–7 they sent an ultimatum to Roumania demanding the cession of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. The Roumanians accepted these demands, and on July 21 new puppet governments in the three Baltic States, with the support of a 'popular vote' secured by the usual Russian methods, asked for the incorporation of their respective countries in the U.S.S.R.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the Prime Minister had given Sir S. Cripps a letter to Stalin in which he wrote that Great Britain intended to save herself and the rest of Europe from German domination, and that he wished the Soviet Government to know that we were ready to discuss with them

<sup>1</sup> The Russian demands on Roumania were followed by demands from Hungary and Bulgaria. The Roumanians, under German pressure, agreed to the return of the southern Dobruja to Bulgaria, and by an award negotiated at Vienna on August 30, Germany and Italy—without consulting Russia—laid down a settlement which gave the Hungarians two-thirds of the Transylvanian territory surrendered to Roumania after the first World War. Germany and Italy then guaranteed what was left of Roumanian territory. A few days later the Roumanian Government resigned. King Carol II abdicated and was succeeded by his son Prince Michael, but the actual government was a pro-Axis dictatorship under General Antonescu.

the problems created by the German attempt to secure such domination 'by successive stages of conquest and absorption.'<sup>1</sup>

Sir S. Cripps found it less easy than he had expected even to see the Soviet leaders.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office did not reckon on an answer to the Prime Minister's letter, but thought that the delivery of it would give the Ambassador a chance of an interview with Stalin. The interview, on July 1, did not go far. Sir S. Cripps asked, on his own initiative, whether the Soviet Government would welcome British help in improving their relations with Turkey. Stalin was ready to accept this help, but made it clear that Russia would want a modification of the Montreux Convention. The Foreign Office considered that there was little chance of the Russians putting forward anything which the Turkish Government would be able to accept. A British attempt at mediation might therefore antagonise both parties. Hence Sir S. Cripps was instructed not to raise the matter with the Soviet Government. There was a deadlock also over the trade negotiations. Sir S. Cripps had explained to M. Mikoyan on June 15 the terms on which trade talks might be held; he had received no answer when at last he saw M. Molotov on August 7. He said to M. Molotov that the contrast between the Soviet attitude towards Germany and towards Great Britain shewed neither a strict neutrality nor an encouragement to Great Britain to improve Anglo-Soviet relations. M. Molotov's answers were again defensive and 'hedging.' He admitted the differences between the Soviet relations with Germany and those with Great Britain, but said that the reasons—apart from the Russo-German pact—were partly geographical, and that the Soviet Government 'recognised the possibility of improving economic relations—and, as a consequence, political relations—with Great Britain.' M. Molotov then complained of British action in regard to the Baltic States, and said that unless we took a different attitude about these States, we could not expect any change for the better in our dealings with the Soviet Government.

The Russian absorption of the Baltic States had indeed set the Foreign Office the difficult problem whether Great Britain should or should not accept a *fait accompli*. There was no doubt about the

<sup>1</sup> For the full text of this letter, see Churchill, II, 119–20. Stalin's comment to Sir S. Cripps on the points raised by the Prime Minister was that Germany could not dominate Europe (which meant dominating the world) without command of the sea. Stalin did not think that in any case Germany was strong enough to dominate Europe or that she intended to try to do so.

<sup>2</sup> At the end of July Sir S. Cripps reported that, in spite of his requests to see M. Molotov, he was always being given a refusal. He thought that the time had come to make it clear through M. Maisky that we were beginning to doubt the usefulness of keeping an Ambassador with a Government of which the Minister for Foreign Affairs refused to see him. Sir S. Cripps was told on August 2 that Lord Halifax would speak to M. Maisky, but that it would be unwise to threaten to withdraw our Ambassador.



methods of fraud and force used by the Soviet Government in securing a vote in favour of incorporation into the Soviet Union. The Foreign Office regarded the Russian action as 'of the same nature as the German conquests of Austria and Czechoslovakia.' They realised that a refusal to recognise a *fait accompli* of this kind rarely benefited the interests either of the victim or of Great Britain, but the Russian annexations had taken place during a war, and there was no certainty that they would be permanent. There was evidence that the Germans strongly disliked them; hence British recognition would give Hitler a chance of posing as the champion of small nations, and of damaging our reputation in neutral countries, not least in the United States. The Foreign Office saw no advantages to be gained from recognition. Neither acceptance nor refusal on our part would make Russian policy in the large any more or less forthcoming. British interests and property in the States were considerable, while the precedents of Soviet action in Poland shewed that they did not recognise any right of compensation, even in the case of the property of foreigners, when they nationalised private property. The Soviet Government had already asked us to hand over gold belonging to the Baltic States Banks which was deposited in London. If we recognised the validity of the Russian proceedings in these States, we should have no legal ground for detaining the gold.

Sir S. Cripps pointed out to M. Molotov that the Russians had delayed the trade negotiations for six weeks before any question had arisen about the Baltic gold. Nevertheless his own view—in spite of the case put to him by the Foreign Office—was that we should accept the Russian demands about the transfer of the gold and also about the detention of Baltic ships in British ports. Lord Halifax explained to Sir S. Cripps that, in addition to the reasons already given to him, we ought not to get into a position in which we should find it hard not to recognise every *fait accompli* presented to us by Russia or Japan. We ought to keep to the proposition that pending a general peace settlement we could not recognise changes brought about during the war. We were prepared to deal with the Soviet Government on the basis that they were *de facto* in administrative control of the Baltic States, but the Russians must not be allowed to use this concession as the basis of a legal claim in the British courts to Baltic assets while they themselves refused compensation to the holders of British property in the Baltic States. We might agree to an unofficial bargain in which we used the gold and ships in settlement of our claims, and handed over the balance to the Russians.<sup>1</sup> Anyhow on general grounds the Foreign Office thought that evidence of our

<sup>1</sup> M. Maisky, in conversation with Lord Halifax, did not rule out the possibility of a bargain. The Foreign Office informed Sir S. Cripps on August 17 that the British claims were likely to amount at least to £6,000,000.

determination to defend our own interests might do more than unilateral concessions to improve Anglo-Soviet relations.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office had meanwhile been consulting the United States Government in order to ensure that any concession on our part over the Baltic gold did not lead the United States to modify their policy with regard to blocked foreign assets— and particularly French gold—in the United States. Lord Lothian, after consulting the State Department, was strongly of the opinion that, if we released the Baltic assets, we should find it difficult to persuade the Americans to maintain their restrictions on French assets when pressure was put on them by the Vichy Government. Lord Halifax therefore told M. Maisky on September 10 that we must give up the idea of a 'deal' on the Baltic questions unless the Soviet Government were willing to renounce their claims to the gold in return for abandonment of our claim to compensation. If the Soviet Government would not agree to this plan, the arrangement would continue as at present—i.e. we should hold the gold and the Soviet Government would enjoy the use of the confiscated property, without prejudice to our mutual good relations, especially in regard to the negotiations for a trade agreement.

The Soviet Government, however, would not consent to discuss trade relations unless we gave way on the question of principle about the Baltic assets. In fact during the next few months the Soviet Government allowed the question of the gold to fall into the background, and, after more inconclusive discussions between Sir S. Cripps and M. Vyshinsky,<sup>2</sup> the Foreign Office recommended that we should requisition the ships, since Soviet policy in general would not be affected by our action in so small a matter. The Soviet Government protested against the requisitioning order, and a further long controversy took place over repatriation of those members of the crews who wished to go home and take up Russian citizenship. An agreement was finally reached, but the ships containing the crews had not sailed at the time of the German attack on Russia. The Russians then agreed that the crews should be told to serve in British and Allied ships.

After the meeting of Hitler and Mussolini at the Brenner early in October, 1940, the Roumanian Government announced that German troops were arriving in the country to assist in the reorganisation of the army. This statement fitted in with reports reaching the Foreign Office that the decisions taken at the Brenner meeting included the postponement of the invasion of Great Britain until the spring of

<sup>1</sup> The Russians concluded a trade agreement with the United States, although they had more serious grievances with the Americans over the question of Baltic assets.

<sup>2</sup> M. Vyshinsky's appointment as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs was announced on September 8, 1940.

1941; meanwhile Germany and Italy would attack us in the Mediterranean area and at Suez and Gibraltar. The plan of attack in the east would include the seizure of Roumania and the Black Sea ports, the neutralisation of Russia, and operations against Turkey and Greece. If we were to counter these plans we needed the support of Turkey, but the co-operation of the Turkish Government would depend on their view of Russian intentions. Sir S. Cripps, to whom the Foreign Office sent their view of the situation on October 12, considered that the Russians did not want the Germans to win the war and that we now had a chance—perhaps our last chance—of making them an offer which would assure them of friendly association with us after the war.

The Foreign Office did not agree with Sir S. Cripps' opinion that the Russians were more afraid of our post-war attitude—the possibility that we might form an anti-Russian combination—than of the attitude of a victorious Germany. They also did not expect much from an approach to the Soviet Government, but they thought it desirable to make the approach. Sir S. Cripps was therefore instructed on the night of October 15–16 to speak to M. Molotov on the lines which he had suggested. He gave M. Vyshinsky<sup>1</sup> a note summarising proposals for an Anglo-Russian understanding to the effect that (i) the U.S.S.R. would apply to Great Britain a neutrality as benevolent as that applied to Germany, and would also maintain a benevolent neutrality towards Turkey and Persia, and would assist these States, if they were attacked by Germany, by measures similar to those adopted by the U.S.S.R. towards China. The U.S.S.R. would also continue their assistance to China, and abstain from entering into any agreement favourable to Japanese plans of aggression; (ii) the British Government would consult the Soviet Government in regard to the post-war settlement, and would not form or enter into any anti-Russian alliance as long as the Soviet Government abstained from action hostile to British interests. Meanwhile the British Government would recognise the *de facto* sovereignty of the U.S.S.R. in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and 'those parts of the former Polish State<sup>2</sup> now under Soviet control,' and would

<sup>1</sup> Sir S. Cripps telegraphed on October 22 that he had asked on October 17 to see M. Molotov. He had had no answer by the evening of October 21, and had then said that, if M. Molotov would not receive him, he must see someone else. M. Molotov's secretary telephoned in the afternoon of October 22 asking Sir S. Cripps to see M. Vyshinsky. Sir S. Cripps thought that M. Molotov's pro-German and anti-British sympathies and policy made him try to avoid closer contact which might call in question the soundness of this policy or influence Stalin in a direction opposed to his (M. Molotov's) wishes.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Cripps used these words on his own authority. The Foreign Office warned him on October 30 that the Soviet Government might claim that the phrase implied a British recognition that the Polish State had ceased to exist. Sir S. Cripps replied by defending his use of the term. The Foreign Office then pointed out to him that a State did not cease to exist because its territories had been overrun, and that the case of Poland was analogous to that of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway.

supply the Russians with any available commodities required for their defence. If a trade or barter agreement between the two countries did not provoke dangerous reaction from the Axis Powers, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. would conclude a non-aggression pact on the lines of the Russo-German pact.

M. Vyshinsky saw Sir S. Cripps again on October 26. He suggested then—and, once more, on November 2—further talks about these proposals, but no interview had taken place before the announcement of a visit by M. Molotov to Berlin. Sir S. Cripps protested strongly to M. Vyshinsky on November 11 about M. Molotov's treatment of him. He said that our offer could not remain open indefinitely, and that a friendly Russian neutrality later would have lost some of its value. The Foreign Office doubted whether Sir S. Cripps' action had been tactically wise, since it might have given the impression that we were frightened at the news of M. Molotov's visit. It would have been better to have assumed that, since the Russian and German Governments were allied, they must consult together, and especially when one of them, as was now the case with Hitler, needed the other's help. The Russians made no further mention to Sir S. Cripps of his proposals. Sir S. Cripps suggested to the Foreign Office on November 19 that he should be given discretionary authority to withdraw the economic proposals. The Foreign Office again disagreed with him; withdrawal of the proposals would not be a means, as Sir S. Cripps thought, of putting pressure on the Soviet Government, since they had shewn little interest in them for months past. On the other hand, if we withdrew them, the Soviet Government would announce the fact as evidence that we had not been sincere in making them.

The Foreign Office gave Sir S. Cripps a summary of the reports which had reached them about M. Molotov's visit to Berlin. They concluded that the result of the meeting had been negative, and that the Russians wanted to keep their freedom of action and had not responded to Hitler's efforts to get their support and cooperation in German moves in the Near and Middle East. The Russians were maintaining their support of China, and their policy in the Balkans seemed to run counter to German plans. Hence our attitude to the Soviet Government should be forthcoming and helpful: we should leave them to make the next move, but do nothing which might suggest impatience, suspicion, or irritation.

Sir S. Cripps was not convinced by these arguments. He proposed to send a letter to M. Mikoyan recounting our attempts over the past six months to get a reply to our proposals for a trade agreement, and indicating that we must now withdraw the proposals since we had to dispose of our surplus commodities. The Foreign Office thought that the terms of the proposed letter were too contentious, but while they were discussing them with Sir S. Cripps Mr. Eden

succeeded Lord Halifax as Secretary of State. Mr. Eden considered that if the letter were sent at this time, the Soviet Government might assume that he had introduced a new policy with regard to Anglo-Soviet relations. M. Maisky had asked for his help in an attempt to improve these relations, and had often said that he (Mr. Eden) had tried for such an improvement during his earlier period of office. Hence the letter might be taken as an even sharper rebuff. Sir S. Cripps accepted this view, and did not send the letter.

(ii)

*Anglo-Russian relations in 1941 to the opening of the German attack on the U.S.S.R.: the Prime Minister's message to Stalin about German plans to attack the U.S.S.R.*

For some time before the German attack in the Balkans, the Foreign Office had begun to receive an increasing amount of information pointing to the possibility of a German attack on Russia. There was no doubt about the military concentrations to which this information referred, but the concentrations might merely be part of a German 'war of nerves' to drive the Soviet Government into accepting complete cooperation with Germany.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office had no means of knowing whether the Russians would give way to German threats or whether the Germans would attack if their demands were not met. Mr. Eden, after his recommendation that Sir S. Cripps should not send a letter of complaint to the Soviet Government, had suggested a short personal message from himself to Stalin reminding him of their meeting in 1935 and saying that he wanted to work for better relations between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. and that he hoped Stalin had the same intention. Sir S. Cripps, however, thought that message of this kind would be taken as a sign of weakness, and that a policy of reserve was more likely to influence the Soviet Government in our direction.

The Soviet Government, however, made no move. At the end of January, 1941, Mr. Eden told M. Maisky that Sir S. Cripps was not being treated with the consideration which the British Ambassador in Moscow had a right to expect, and that he had not been invited to see M. Molotov for three and a half months. As a result of this

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<sup>1</sup> On January 10, 1941, the Russo-German agreement of 1939 was renewed in a pact of friendship which also provided for the settlement of questions connected with the Russian annexation of the Baltic States and the Russo-German frontier in occupied Poland. At the same time a new Russo-German trade agreement was signed in Moscow.

complaint M. Molotov sent for Sir S. Cripps on February 1 but the interview was, in Sir S. Cripps' words, 'quite unproductive.' M. Molotov refused to discuss the British economic proposals, and repeated twice that the Russian expectations of Sir S. Cripps' appointment had come to nothing, and that Anglo-Soviet relations were even worse than before his arrival. Sir S. Cripps tried to discuss the British political proposals, but M. Molotov 'showed himself frankly bored and impatient, finally announcing that he had no more to say.'

In spite of this interview Sir S. Cripps was inclined to think that minor concessions would have an effect on Soviet policy. The Foreign Office did not take this view. They thought that until the Russians gave up 'appeasing' Hitler we could not hope to reach any real understanding with them. A new factor arose, however, when the Foreign Office obtained more definite evidence of Hitler's intentions to attack Russia. This evidence came in a report from Belgrade on March 31 that Hitler had told Prince Paul of Yugoslavia that he planned to open his attack on June 30.<sup>1</sup> In view of this report, and of the most recent information received by the War Office of German troop movements, the Prime Minister on April 3 sent a message of warning to Stalin.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill wished Sir S. Cripps to deliver this message personally. He also agreed with a suggestion from Mr. Eden<sup>3</sup> that Sir S. Cripps should point out to the Soviet Government that they might use the delay caused to the German plans by the Yugoslav *coup d'état*, and that their best way to strengthen themselves would be to give material help to Turkey and Greece, and through Greece to Yugoslavia.

Sir S. Cripps replied on April 5 that it was out of the question for him to deliver a message personally to Stalin. The Prime Minister asked him to send the message through M. Molotov, but Sir S. Cripps telegraphed that he was sure that the Soviet Government were aware of the facts which the Prime Minister wished to tell them, and that it would be a mistake to deliver the message, since M. Molotov would interpret it as an attempt by us to make trouble between Russia and Germany. The Prime Minister, however, considered that it was his duty to have the facts 'conveyed to the Head of the Russian State. It makes no difference to the importance of the facts that they or their channel are unwelcome.' Sir S. Cripps was

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden telegraphed this report, in a slightly less definite form, on April 6. Lord Halifax reported on the night of April 2-3 the same information from Mr. Welles. Mr. Welles also said that Göring had told Mr. Matsuoka in Berlin (see below, pp. 171-2) that Germany intended to attack Russia immediately after the attack on Great Britain, even if this latter attack failed.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 320.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of Mr. Eden's instructions to Sir S. Cripps, see Churchill, III, 320-1.



instructed accordingly on April 11. He answered on the night of April 12-13 that just before receiving these instructions he had sent a personal letter to M. Vyshinsky that, unless they decided on immediate cooperation with the countries still opposing the Axis in the Balkans, the Russians would miss the last chance of defending their frontier with others. Sir S. Cripps thought that if he gave the Prime Minister's message to M. Molotov he would weaken the impression created by his own letter.

The Foreign Office could not understand why, after refusing to communicate the Prime Minister's message for ten days, Sir S. Cripps had written a letter raising the whole political issue.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister's message was short, and merely gave information without asking for discussion. The Foreign Office, however, was now doubtful whether it was desirable to deliver the message, but the Prime Minister insisted upon its delivery. Sir S. Cripps therefore sent it to M. Vyshinsky on April 19. On the previous day—again on his own initiative—he had given M. Vyshinsky a long memorandum for M. Molotov. In this memorandum Sir S. Cripps said plainly that in view of the German threat to them the Soviet Government had to choose between an immediate improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations or surrender to Germany. This memorandum had no more effect than his previous expositions of the situation, but Sir S. Cripps continued to send to Mr. Eden lengthy recommendations on the desirability of reopening discussions with the Soviet Government.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Eden had in fact let M. Maisky know on April 16 of Prince Paul's statement, and had asked whether there was any possibility of an Anglo-Russian *rapprochement*. M. Maisky evaded the issue by a reference to the Baltic questions as a 'stumbling-block'; it was, however, increasingly clear during the next month that the Soviet Government were unwilling to make any approach which might provoke Hitler, and that their insistence on the Baltic questions was a convenient excuse. Until the end of May a Russian surrender seemed more likely than resistance to German demands, but in the fortnight or three weeks before the German attack the evidence—though it was never certain—suggested that Hitler had decided to deal with the Russians once and for all without even giving them a chance of

<sup>1</sup> Sir S. Cripps explained that he had written to M. Vyshinsky because the latter had told him on March 22 that there was no possibility of an Anglo-Russian discussion of general political questions. The Foreign Office considered that this statement should have kept Sir S. Cripps from writing his letter.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister commented on April 22 with regard to one of Sir S. Cripps' telegrams: 'None of these (proposals) seems to me worth the trouble it has taken to send. They (the Soviet Government) know perfectly well their danger and also that we need their aid. You will get much more out of them by letting these forces work than by frantic efforts to assure them of your love. This only looks like weakness and encourages them to believe that they are stronger than they are. Now is the moment for a sombre restraint on our part, and let them do the worrying. Above all, we ought not to fret the Americans about it.'



surrender to the most stringent demands.<sup>1</sup> On June 10 M. Maisky told Mr. Eden that the Soviet Government were not negotiating with the Germans, and did not intend to make a military alliance with them. Mr. Eden referred to the German military concentrations, and said that, in the event of a Russo-German war, we should do everything in our power to attack by air German-occupied territory in the west. M. Maisky 'nodded, but made no comment.' On the evening of June 13 Mr. Eden invited M. Maisky to see him. He said that, after consultation with the Prime Minister, and in view of the reports received within the previous forty-eight hours, he wanted to tell M. Maisky that, if the Germans attacked the U.S.S.R., we should be willing to send a mission to Russia representing the three fighting services. We did not pretend to any superiority in the art of war over the Russian commanders, but our mission might be a help since it would be composed of officers who had had the most recent experience of fighting the Germans. We should also give urgent consideration to Russian economic needs. M. Maisky mentioned Mr. Eden's previous statement about air action; he thought that we were exaggerating the German concentrations, and that Germany was not intending to attack Russia. He did not refuse Mr. Eden's proposal, but said that it presupposed intimate Anglo-Russian collaboration, and that the Soviet view of the message would be more favourable if it were accompanied by action on our part showing that we desired more friendly relations.

In fact the Foreign Office were taking such action. They thought it desirable to consult the United States Government on the possibility of American help to the Soviet Government. Lord Halifax spoke to Mr. Welles on the subject on June 15.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Welles said that there would be no objection of principle; there would, however, be practical difficulties, since Russia would want the commodities most needed by Great Britain and the United States. On June 14-15 Mr. Eden also instructed the British Minister at Helsinki to warn the Finnish President and Marshal Mannerheim that, if Finland entered a Russo-German war on the German side, she would lose British support and sympathy, and we should have to subject her to economic pressure.

<sup>1</sup> The Joint Intelligence Committee on June 14 estimated that the Germans would be in Moscow within six weeks of opening an attack. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, and the Foreign Office generally, at this time and during the five critical months of the German advance into Russia, were much more confident than the Service Departments about the Russian chances of successful resistance.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister telegraphed to President Roosevelt on the same day. For the text of his message, and of the President's reply, see Churchill, III, 330.

## (iii)

*The Prime Minister's broadcast of June 22, 1941: Russian suspicions of Great Britain: Anglo-Russian agreement of July 12: Stalin's demands for a diversionary attack in the west (June-September, 1941).*

The Prime Minister broadcast an offer of British assistance to Russia on the evening of June 22.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the earlier offers to Russia, the first question put to Mr. Eden by M. Maisky on the morning of June 22—after the opening of the German attack—shewed his suspicions that Great Britain might treat Russia as Russia had treated Great Britain in 1939. M. Maisky asked whether he could tell the Soviet Government that our position and policy were unchanged. He felt sure that Germany would try to combine war against Russia with a peace move to the Western Powers. Could he therefore say that our war effort would not slacken? Mr. Eden answered that, so far from slackening our war effort, we should increase it. Mr. Baggallay, *chargé d'affaires* at Moscow,<sup>2</sup> was given an equally cautious reception by M. Vyshinsky.

The term 'suspicion' covered only a part of the Russian attitude. The Russians had watched with malevolent neutrality our fight for survival. They now feared that we might let them and the Germans fight to mutual exhaustion. Moreover the Russians were fighting only because they had been attacked. The fact of this attack did not change their hostility to Great Britain and the United States as the leading States of the capitalist world. They regarded their defensive war against Germany as an episode in a vaster and longer struggle. Unlike the British and the Americans, they did not look forward to victory over the Germans as the beginning of a new era. They were not fighting for the 'freedom' of western civilisation; they were hardly less concerned with protecting themselves against their 'allies' than with winning the war against Germany. Stalin and Molotov therefore bargained with Great Britain and the United States just as they had bargained with Germany in 1939. They began at once to safeguard themselves against the dangers of victory, that is to say, the risks, as they saw them, of the re-establishment of a powerful western coalition. They also knew that the safeguards which they had in mind would involve encroachments unacceptable to British and American opinion on the liberties and independence of other States.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the greater part of this broadcast, see Churchill, III, 331-3.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Cripps had been recalled to London for consultation, and had left Moscow on June 6. He returned to Moscow on June 27 with the British Military Mission.

<sup>3</sup> It is not possible to distinguish between the Russian leaders as far as concerned the essentials of policy, but there was in M. Molotov's methods a special hardness, rigidity, and refusal to consider the interests and even the convenience of others which exasperated those who negotiated with him.

On June 28 Sir S. Cripps reported that M. Molotov had asked him on the previous night to 'clarify' the British attitude. He wanted to know what degree of cooperation we proposed, whether we intended political cooperation, and whether we would conclude an agreement to define the basis upon which it would develop. M. Maisky put a similar question to Mr. Eden on June 30. Was our collaboration to be military or military and economic or military and economic and political? Mr. Eden said that on military and economic matters the position was already clear. The question of political collaboration was more difficult. Mr. Eden asked whether the Soviet Government suggested an alliance or some less far-reaching agreement.

Sir S. Cripps delivered a message from the Prime Minister to Stalin on July 8.<sup>1</sup> At this interview—which lasted an hour—Stalin said that he had in mind an agreement under two heads: (i) mutual help without precision as to quantity or quality; (ii) neither side to conclude a separate peace. Stalin said that without such an agreement Russia felt isolated in view of all the agreements Germany had against her. The Prime Minister sent to Mr. Eden a draft reply on July 9. The draft included a paragraph to the effect that at the Peace Conference, in which the United States would certainly be a leading party, our view would be that territorial frontiers would have to be settled in accordance with the wishes of the people concerned and on general ethnographical lines, and that the units thus established must be free to choose 'their own form of government and system of life, so long as they do not interfere with the similar rights of neighbouring peoples.'

The War Cabinet decided to omit this paragraph, since it might cause difficulty with the Poles in their negotiations with the Russians.<sup>2</sup> Obviously the British Government would have to consult the Governments of the Dominions, but Mr. Eden also thought it desirable to get the approval of the United States Government. He therefore spoke to Mr. Winant about the proposed agreement. Mr. Winant suggested that, from the point of view of American opinion, the agreement should not take the form of a treaty, since, owing to the constitutional procedure in the United States, a treaty had a 'specially serious sound' to American opinion.

The Prime Minister's message, as amended, was telegraphed to Sir S. Cripps on the night of July 9–10.<sup>3</sup> Sir S. Cripps was also given a short draft text. He replied on July 10 that Stalin had accepted a draft of an 'agreement for joint action between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the U.S.S.R.

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 340.

<sup>2</sup> For these negotiations, see below, pp. 200–1.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the message, see Churchill, III, 341–2.

in the war against Germany,' (Stalin insisted on some form of title, and upon the signature of the agreement in Moscow). The agreement covered the two points put forward by Stalin—i.e. an undertaking to provide during the war assistance and support of all kinds, and not to negotiate or conclude during the war an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.

The agreement was signed on July 12. A week later M. Maisky brought a message from Stalin to the Prime Minister making the first of many Russian proposals for the establishment of a second front—in fact, two fronts, one in northern France and the other in the Arctic.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister sent a reply<sup>2</sup> on the night of July 20–21 pointing out the impossibility at this time of a successful landing in northern France or in Norway, and explaining that we were planning operations<sup>3</sup> against German shipping in northern waters. On receiving the reply Stalin said to Sir S. Cripps that he understood the difficulties and that he had 'no questions and no reproaches.' It was, however, evident that, as their military position became more critical, the Russians would become more insistent upon a British diversionary attack. The Germans had reached Smolensk on July 16, though the Russians did not evacuate it until over three weeks later. On the day after the delivery of Stalin's message to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office had reports—not confirmed by Sir S. Cripps—that measures were being taken to evacuate Moscow, and that some Government departments had already been moved eastwards.<sup>4</sup>

The Foreign Office found it difficult to get information from the Russians. The Service Missions were not better treated. General Mason-Macfarlane, the head of the British Mission, complained again and again of the lack of proper liaison. Sir S. Cripps wrote that even when the Mission had important information to communicate there would be delays, amounting to forty-eight hours, in arranging a meeting. A special mission to advise on air raid precautions had been sent to Moscow; the Russians took no notice of it for eleven days. The Foreign Office thought that Sir S. Cripps and General Mason-Macfarlane were over-sensitive about this lack of co-operation. Mr. Eden noted on one of their complaints: 'I am doubtful if we ought to make too much fuss. We are not giving all that amount of help.' The Prime Minister and the President, at their meeting in mid-August<sup>5</sup> sent a joint message to Stalin promising the

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 342–3.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this reply, see Churchill, III, 343–5.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. in order to prevent the transport of German troops to the Arctic.

<sup>4</sup> In mid-July the general British military estimate was that the German armies might reach the Caucasus at the end of August or early in September. The Germans were attempting a threefold advance through southern Poland and the Ukraine, through White Russia to Smolensk and Moscow, and through the Baltic States towards Leningrad.

<sup>5</sup> See below, pp. 429–30. For the text of the joint message to Stalin, see Churchill, III, 394 and 396.

maximum help in supplies, and suggesting a conference in Moscow to discuss the 'allocation of our joint resources,' but from the Russian point of view a conference was concerned with a distant future, while the Germans were advancing more and more deeply into Russian territory. The signature of the Atlantic Charter was of no direct and immediate military value, and indeed caused some suspicion.

The Prime Minister sent another message to Stalin after his return to London.<sup>1</sup> In a reply of September 4 Stalin said that there was only one way out of the existing military situation: the establishment of a second front somewhere in the Balkans or France capable of drawing away 30-40 divisions from the Russian front, and the provision of a monthly minimum aid to Russia amounting to 400 aircraft and 500 tanks. Without these measures, the Soviet Union would either be defeated or weakened to such an extent that it would lose for a long time any capacity to help its Allies.<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Cripps telegraphed that in his view Stalin's statement was not exaggerated, and that unless we could make a superhuman effort we should 'lose the whole value of any Russian front, at any rate for a long time, and possibly for good.' Sir S. Cripps thought that unfortunately we had considered the Russian war as no direct responsibility of ours, but merely as a war we wanted to help in any way we could without endangering our own position.

The Prime Minister pointed out to M. Maisky—who spoke in the same terms as those of Stalin's message—that an immediate landing in northern France and the Low Countries was impossible. He stated again to Sir S. Cripps, with a certain bland patience, the obvious physical impossibility of carrying out any successful diversion on the coasts of northern France or the Low Countries.<sup>3</sup> In his reply to Stalin on the night of September 5-6 he repeated the facts once more.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Churchill sent a copy of Stalin's message and his reply to Mr. Roosevelt with the comment that, although nothing in the language used in the message or by M. Maisky warranted the assumption, 'we could not exclude the impression that they might be thinking of separate terms.'<sup>5</sup>

Sir S. Cripps reported on September 7 that, when he presented the Prime Minister's message, he found Stalin 'very depressed and tired,' with 'some return of the old attitude of suspicion and distrust.' Sir S. Cripps asked whether the Russians could hold out until the spring if they had the supplies mentioned in the Prime Minister's letter. Stalin answered that it was 'difficult to say.' He could not foresee what the Germans would do, since they had no need to take

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 403-4.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 405-6.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 409-10.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 407-8.

<sup>5</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 409.

a western front into consideration. In any case the Soviet Union would not make a separate peace. If they lost the Donetz basin, Moscow, and Leningrad—with two-thirds of their war industries—they would have to withdraw from active fighting, and to dig in and wait on a defensive front, perhaps beyond the Volga. M. Maisky received an answer from Stalin to the Prime Minister's message on September 14. Stalin now asked that, if a second front in the west were impossible, Great Britain should land 25-30 divisions at Archangel or transport them across Iran.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister replied on September 18 to this fantastic suggestion by referring to the forthcoming conference at Moscow on supplies, and by a statement that the British staff had examined all possible theatres of Anglo-Russian cooperation.<sup>2</sup> M. Maisky told Mr. Eden that the Prime Minister's reply would have a 'disheartening effect' because he rejected the possibility of assistance in South Russia. Mr. Churchill therefore decided to explain once again that the situation was governed by shipping. We could study any plan, but we ought not to encourage the delusion that we could send large armies to fight in Russia.

The Prime Minister and the President had not intended that the conference on supplies should be held before the latter part of September, since they thought it impossible to know earlier where the Russian front was likely to be stabilised or even whether it would be east or west of Moscow. In view of the gravity of the Russian situation the Foreign Office thought in the latter half of August that an earlier date was desirable. It appeared, however, that the Americans would not be ready before October 15. The Prime Minister considered this date too late and suggested September 30. In fact, the British and American delegations arrived in Moscow on September 28.

(iv)

*The Moscow Conference on supplies for the U.S.S.R.: Russian political demands: British declaration of war on Finland, Hungary, and Roumania (September-December, 1941).*

The Moscow Conference settled the arrangements for supplies to Russia until June, 1942, but any satisfaction which the Russians

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 411-12.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 412-13. The implication of the message was clearly that we could not send 25-30 divisions to fight on the Russian front since we had neither the men nor sufficient shipping to transport them. The Russians, however, did not take the message as an answer to their appeal for these British divisions. See also below, p. 157.



might have felt at the scale of assistance offered to them was overshadowed by their immediate military danger. An article in *Pravda* on October 9 admitted for the first time the threat to Moscow. On October 15 Sir S. Cripps telegraphed that the Soviet Government and the diplomatic corps were leaving for Kuibyshev. Moreover some confusion arose over the discussion, or rather lack of discussion, of military questions during the conference. The British delegation was headed by Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Supply. The Prime Minister drew up a directive for Lord Beaverbrook dealing with the general strategic situation as well as with questions of supply. The directive stated that 'all ideas of twenty or thirty divisions being launched by Great Britain against the western shores of the Continent or sent round by sea for service in Russia have no foundation of reality on which to rest. This should be made clear.'<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister also gave Lord Beaverbrook a letter to Stalin in which he said that General Ismay was accompanying the delegation and was authorised to study with the Russian commanders 'any plans for practical cooperation which may suggest themselves.'<sup>2</sup>

General Ismay had no conversations with Stalin or the Russian commanders. According to Mr. Harriman's notes<sup>3</sup> of the informal conversations at the conference on matters other than supply, Lord Beaverbrook mentioned to Stalin on September 28 that General Ismay was ready to hold 'strategic discussions.' He also invited Stalin to send a mission to Great Britain 'to consider the British problem and advise on what might be done.' He said that the British were building up in Iran<sup>4</sup> divisions which might join the Russians in the Caucasus. Stalin answered, 'There is no war in the Caucasus, but there is in the Ukraine.' Lord Beaverbrook said that 'this might be taken up too.' He asked whether Stalin thought that the British could invade France. Stalin said that he did not know enough about the situation, but that he had confidence in Mr. Churchill's judgment, but 'why did we not send a force to Archangel or the Ukraine?'

Lord Beaverbrook does not appear to have said anything more to the Russians about the proposal for discussions with General Ismay. Sir S. Cripps reported later that he had tried to persuade Lord Beaverbrook to let him arrange a meeting between General Ismay and Stalin, and that neither he (Sir S. Cripps) nor General Mason-Macfarlane knew of Lord Beaverbrook's offer to Stalin, and that he

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this directive, see Churchill, III, 764-8.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this letter, see Churchill, III, 414-5.

<sup>3</sup> No official record was kept on the British side of these informal conversations, but Mr. Harriman, the leader of the United States Delegation, took notes of them, and gave a copy to Lord Beaverbrook, who made it available to the War Cabinet. It is not possible, from these notes, to say whether Stalin understood the reasons why 25-30 divisions could not be sent to Russia.

<sup>4</sup> For the Anglo-Russian action in Iran, see Section (v) of this chapter.



was sure that General Ismay was also unaware of it. Hence, while the Prime Minister was under the impression that Lord Beaverbrook or General Ismay or both of them had explained fully the practical difficulties which made it impossible to send a large force to Russia, M. Molotov was still awaiting an answer to the Russian request for it. The Prime Minister made an offer to Stalin at the beginning of October to take over the responsibility of maintaining the supply route through northern Iran if the Russians wished to withdraw the five or six divisions stationed there. Sir S. Cripps transmitted this message through M. Molotov, but the latter did not like the idea, and thought that it would be better to send British troops to the Caucasus.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden repeated to M. Maisky on October 16 the proposal about Iran and said that we might be able to send a token force to the Caucasus.

Meanwhile M. Molotov continued to ask why we could not send an army to Russia. He complained on October 23 to Sir S. Cripps that we had not answered the Russian request of September 14. Sir S. Cripps said that he thought we had replied that we could not send 25-30 divisions anywhere, but that we would keep the matter under constant review and send a smaller force if we were able to do so. He promised to enquire from London whether his answer was right. The Prime Minister replied on October 25 that the Russian suggestion was a 'physical absurdity.'<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister's message crossed a telegram from Sir S. Cripps setting out his views at great length. He said that there was very strong feeling in the Soviet Government about the lack of armed help from us, and that, if we could not relieve the pressure on the Russians by action elsewhere, the only way of improving matters would be to send troops to the U.S.S.R. On October 26 Sir S. Cripps added that in his view the Soviet Government had not yet been given a full explanation of our difficulties. He mentioned that no interview had been arranged during the Moscow Conference between General Ismay and Stalin.

The Prime Minister sent a long reply to Sir S. Cripps on October 28. Although he had already explained at length both to Stalin and Sir S. Cripps the hard facts which imposed limitations upon our assistance, he summed up once again the attitude of the British Government, and said that we were doing everything within our power to help the Russians and that, in view of their own past actions, they had no right to reproach us.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office thought that Sir S. Cripps must have meant the Ukraine, but the term 'Caucasus' was used in these discussions with considerable vagueness.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's reply, see Churchill, III, 413.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 420-1. The Prime Minister at this time appears to have thought that Sir S. Cripps was considering an attack in Parliament on British policy with regard to aid to Russia.

On November 2 Sir S. Cripps was sent Mr. Harriman's notes of the informal talks at the Moscow Conference. The record included a question by Stalin to Lord Beaverbrook whether the Anglo-Russian military alliance and agreement not to conclude a separate peace might be extended to cover the post-war period. Lord Beaverbrook had said that he was in favour of such an extension. Stalin added that all the officials of the Soviet Government wanted it. Sir S. Cripps telegraphed that he was greatly surprised that these conversations had not been reported to him earlier, and why so little notice had been taken, in particular, of Stalin's suggestion. He complained that he had been put in a false position because M. Molotov had been present at the conversations, but that, at Lord Beaverbrook's request, and since the conversations were to deal only with supply, he (Sir S. Cripps) had not been present at them. Sir S. Cripps thought that the Soviet Government would regard him as excluded from political discussions with the U.S.S.R. He asked to be relieved of his post if he were not authorised to take up at once the proposals for an extension of the Anglo-Russian alliance. He proposed, as a basis of a treaty, that Great Britain, the United States, and the U.S.S.R. should negotiate before the Peace Conference an agreement covering the broad lines of a European settlement and that they should begin consultations about it at "an early date".

The Secretary of State telegraphed to Sir S. Cripps on the night of November 10-11 that, according to Lord Beaverbrook, Stalin did not attach much importance to the 'diplomatic' discussions incidental to the main business of the conference. In any case it was impracticable for us to formulate our peace objectives for discussion with our Allies more definitely than had been done in the Atlantic Charter. We had explained to M. Maisky that we wanted to continue our collaboration after the war—and Sir S. Cripps should speak accordingly to Stalin—but we could not now discuss the broad lines of a European settlement, and the Russians had not asked us to do so. We thought that we should have to introduce so many 'provisos and conditions' into a treaty that the result might be only to arouse suspicions and misgivings on both sides. As the war situation improved, we should have more chance of discussing future plans for Anglo-Russian co-operation. Meantime Mr. Eden asked Sir S. Cripps to stay in Russia in order to prepare the ground, and said that he hoped perhaps to pay a visit there 'at a not too distant date.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir S. Cripps repeated his intention to resign if we did not agree to discuss with Stalin questions of post-war collaboration and planning. The Foreign Office pointed out to him on November 17 that we had no intention of excluding such discussion, but that as yet we could not define at all precisely the lines of post-war collaboration. We could not go beyond the principles laid down in the Atlantic Charter without bringing the United States into the discussions, and the United States Government had asked us repeatedly not to undertake during the war any commitments which would bind us at and after the peace negotiations.

After realising that General Ismay had not taken part in any strategic conversations in Moscow,<sup>1</sup> the Prime Minister sent a message on November 4 to Stalin that, if he wished, General Wavell and General Paget would go to Russia to explain the British position. He also asked Stalin to consider whether it was really good policy for Great Britain to declare war on Finland, Roumania, and Hungary.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office had been considering this question for some time, and the Soviet Government had asked early in September for a declaration of war on Finland. The Foreign Office thought that this step would be inexpedient, and that it might drive the Finns completely to the German side. Mr. Eden sent a warning to the Finnish Government, but the warning had no effect. Hence M. Maisky brought a message early in October from M. Molotov asking for a declaration of war on all three countries. The War Cabinet still thought that the practical effect would be to fix these countries on the German side, and enable the Germans to use three more armies against us, but that, if the Russians insisted, we should have to do what they asked.

M. Maisky brought to the Foreign Office on November 11 a message from Stalin to the Prime Minister.<sup>3</sup> The message was in unfriendly terms. It repeated strongly the Russian demand for a declaration of war against Finland, Hungary, and Roumania, and complained that the 'lack of clarity' in Anglo-Russian relations was due to the facts (i) that there was no definite understanding between the two countries on war aims and post-war plans, (ii) that there was no agreement on 'mutual military assistance against Hitler in Europe.' Stalin was willing to receive Generals Wavell and Paget, but only if they came 'with a view to conclude agreement' on these 'fundamental questions.'

Mr. Eden gave an *interim* reply to M. Maisky on November 12. He said that the message raised very large issues, and could not be answered at once, but that the War Cabinet had been 'surprised and pained' at its tone and contents. M. Maisky tried to explain that Stalin was under great strain. Mr. Eden said that, at times, we

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister wrote to Mr. Eden on November 1 that even if these conversations had taken place (as he had expected) they would have made no difference in fact, since there was at present no practical step of any serious importance open to us. See Churchill, III, 465-6. For the text of the Prime Minister's message of November 4, see Churchill, III, 468-9.

<sup>2</sup> Great Britain had broken off diplomatic relations with Hungary in the spring of 1941 after the Regent (Admiral Horthy) had allowed the passage of German troops through Hungarian territory. The Regent had acted against the advice of Count Teleki, the Prime Minister (who committed suicide), and under pressure from the Hungarian General Staff. Similar pressure led to a Hungarian declaration of war on Russia in June, 1941. One of the reasons for this pressure was a fear that, if Hungary did not actively support the Germans, she might be compelled to give back part of the territory ceded to her by Roumania under the Vienna award (see above, p. 141, note 1). The Roumanians, on the other hand, supported the Germans against Russia partly in the hope of getting a reversal of this award, and also the return of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina from Russia.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 469-70.

thought that the Soviet Government believed it possible to affect our decisions by means of their political influence in Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office considered that Stalin's proposal was due to his fear that, as he had hoped to see Great Britain and Germany weakened, so we and the Americans now wanted to make an Anglo-American peace from which the U.S.S.R.—exhausted by the war—would be excluded. We did not know the Russian aims; they would probably ask for access to the Persian Gulf, the revision of the Montreux Convention, and the establishment of Russian bases in Norway, Finland, and the Baltic States. If efficient arrangements were made for general disarmament and security, they might ask for less. At present they might be content with some general resolution; if they wanted more than this, they would have to define their ideas to us and to the United States. We ought to let them see that we were treating them on an equality, and that the peace settlement would be dictated largely by the three Powers.

The Prime Minister sent a reply to Stalin on November 21.<sup>2</sup> On the previous day M. Maisky had again said to Mr. Eden that Stalin had not intended to cause offence by his message, and that he had 'only practical and business-like questions in view.' The Prime Minister's message promised a declaration of war on Finland if the Finns did not stop fighting within a fortnight,<sup>3</sup> and said that Mr. Eden, with military and other experts, was ready to go to Moscow. Stalin's answer was now more friendly.<sup>4</sup> He accepted the proposal for a visit by Mr. Eden. Before Mr. Eden arrived in Russia the most critical period of the threat to Moscow had passed. The Germans had come within thirty miles of the city, but between the third week of November and the first week of December their attacks failed, and the Russians began to push them back on a wide front. Winter came early everywhere on the Russian front, and in spite of the immense Russian losses in men, material and territory, the Germans had not secured their objective—the defeat of Russia in 1941. They were thus heavily committed in eastern Europe at the moment when they added the United States to their enemies.

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office had long been aware of M. Maisky's own 'calculated indiscretions' and propagandist conversation with journalists. A foreign diplomat, before the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the war, had said to a member of the Foreign Office that 'if any other ambassador conducted himself like Maisky, he would be *persona non grata*.' The Foreign Office had decided that it was better to make no complaint to M. Maisky about his activities.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the reply, see Churchill, III, 471-2.

<sup>3</sup> The Finnish Government took no notice of a further warning. On December 5 the British Government declared war on them, and, at the same time, on Hungary and Roumania. For an exchange of messages between the Prime Minister and Marshal Mannerheim, see Churchill, III, 474.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of the reply, see Churchill, III, 472-3.

(v)

*Anglo-Russian demands on Iran for the expulsion of German nationals: refusal of the Iranian Government to meet the demands: entry of Anglo-Russian forces into Iran: abdication of the Shah, and Iranian acceptance of the Allied demands: the Anglo-Russo-Iranian treaty of January 29, 1942.*

At the outbreak of war the Foreign Office was concerned both with Russian and German influence in Iran. Iran was of economic and strategic importance to Great Britain as a source of oil, and owing to its geographical position between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, with frontiers touching Iraq, Turkey, the U.S.S.R., Afghanistan, and the outposts of British India. Anglo-Iranian relations in the recent past had not been close or friendly. The Iranians associated Great Britain with the partition of their country, under the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907, into two spheres of influence. After the first World War, in spite of British efforts, the Soviet Government had been able to re-establish their position.

The Russians were able to exercise greater pressure than the British because they could march cross their own frontiers into Iran. For these same reasons of proximity, they had always been the most important purchasers of Iranian goods. Here again the Soviet Government continued in a new form the policy of the Tsarist Government; they made trade agreements with Iran, and sent engineers and technicians into the country. In the years before the war, their most important rivals—outside the area of the oilfields in the south—were German rather than British. The Iranian Government, which, under the dominant impulse of the Shah, was rapidly modernising Iran, had welcomed German interest in the country not only for economic reasons but also as a set-off against Russian and, to a lesser extent, British influence.

After the defeat of France the Germans increased their hold on Iran. Iranian opinion was impressed with the scale of the German victories, and thus inclined more than ever to look to Germany as the potential deliverer of their country from what they regarded as Russian and British domination. In the spring and early summer of 1941 the German successes in the Balkans gave increased scope for anti-British propaganda, but Iran was not within the sphere of active military operations either for Germany or Great Britain, and—as the Shah well knew—there were no British forces available to compel Iran to put a curb on German activities.<sup>1</sup> Even if there had been troops to spare, a British move against Iran would have brought strong opposition from the U.S.S.R.

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<sup>1</sup> The revolt of Rashid Ali in Iraq was largely organised on Iranian territory.

The German attack on the U.S.S.R. changed the situation. The Russians were now no less interested than the British in getting the Germans out of Iran. The German 'fifth column' which had previously menaced Iraq might threaten the Caucasian oilfields, and damage the railway from Teheran to the Persian Gulf which was of the greatest use for the passage of British and American supplies to the U.S.S.R. Already in January, 1941, the Secretary of State had instructed Sir R. Bullard, British Minister at Teheran, to speak strongly to the Iranian Government about the number of Germans—some 2,000—in the country.

On July 8, at his first meeting with Sir S. Cripps, Stalin approved of a joint Anglo-Russian *démarche* at Teheran. M. Maisky also raised the matter with the Foreign Office, and suggested that, if necessary, we should threaten Iran with economic sanctions. The Foreign Office thought it better first to try the effect of diplomatic representations for the removal of Germans known to be engaged in political activities. The Soviet Government agreed with this plan. Sir R. Bullard therefore told the Iranian Foreign Minister on July 19 that, while we wanted to maintain the independence of Iran, we could do so only if the Iranian Government preserved their own freedom from foreign control. We therefore asked for the expulsion of certain specified Germans. The Soviet Minister made a similar request. The Iranian Government agreed that a reduction in the number of Germans in the country was desirable, but did little to turn them out.

The Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff meanwhile had come to the conclusion that, if the Iranians did not expel the Germans, a threat of economic sanctions would be useless, since the Iranians would reply by cutting off our oil supplies. The only means of securing our demands would be a threat of a Russian invasion from the north and a British invasion from the south. The Soviet Government agreed to a joint move of this kind if our demands were refused.

The British and Soviet Ministers made a new approach to the Iranian Government on August 16. They asked 'in the most formal and emphatic manner' for the expulsion of most of the Germans. They made no open threat of the use of force if their demand were refused, and repeated that neither Great Britain nor the U.S.S.R. had designs against the neutrality, independence or territorial integrity of Iran. The Iranian Government replied that they were reducing the numbers of the Germans, but that their expulsion was solely an Iranian concern, and that they (the Iranian Government) could not put into effect against the nationals of one State measures incompatible with the neutrality of Iran.

In view of this unsatisfactory reply, British and Russian troops on August 25 entered respectively the southern and northern frontiers of

Iran, and the two Ministers presented a note to the Iranian Government that the Allies were compelled to take these military measures against the activities of the Axis Powers. The Iranian Government nominally accepted the Allied demands; they still delayed in carrying them out. The Allies then decided to advance on Teheran. Their troops entered the suburbs of the city on September 17, and secured the abdication of the Shah. After rounding up most of the German agents, the Allies withdrew to lines upon which they had agreed. Negotiations were opened for an Anglo-Russian-Iranian treaty, but the treaty was not accepted by the Majlis until January 26, 1942; it was signed three days later. Under its terms the two occupying Powers agreed to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Iran and to defend her against aggression. They promised to withdraw their forces not later than six months after the war, and meanwhile to ensure that the presence of their troops in Iran disturbed as little as possible the national administration and economic life. The Iranian Government, on their side, agreed to allow the Allied Powers all facilities for carrying out their undertakings. The Iranian Minister in London asked Mr. Eden whether he could give an additional public reassurance about Iranian territorial integrity and independence. Mr. Eden therefore stated in the House of Commons that the British and Soviet Governments had no designs which would conflict with their undertakings. Mr. Eden quoted a speech of November 6, 1941, by Stalin affirming that the U.S.S.R. had no such war aims as 'the conquest of foreign territory, and the enslaving of other nations . . . in Europe and Asia.'



## CHAPTER VIII

### Great Britain, the United States, and Japan

#### (i)

*Anglo-Japanese relations from the outbreak of war to the end of 1940: the temporary closing of the Burma Road: the Tripartite Pact: the reopening of the Burma Road: Anglo-American discussions on the Far Eastern situation.*

IN September, 1939, Japan had been at war with China, in fact, though not in name, for more than two years. The war had become a test of endurance in which the Japanese were trying to cut off Chinese supplies from abroad and the Chinese were hoping to wear down the Japanese forces in the field and indirectly to break the internal economy of Japan. The Japanese believed that they could win this test of endurance, but—apart from the military extremists—they would have been well satisfied to find a way out of it without loss of face and on terms satisfactory to themselves. They regarded Great Britain and the United States as primarily responsible for the maintenance of Chinese resistance. Japanese interests therefore appeared to be on the side of the Axis Powers, and the Government had been considering whether they would accept the transformation of the tripartite 'anti-Comintern' pact of 1936 into a military alliance. Although they were disconcerted by the Russo-German agreement,<sup>1</sup> they were not inclined to alter their policy in favour of a *rapprochement* with Great Britain and France; the outbreak of war in Europe seemed rather to provide them with a chance to establish their predominance in China so firmly that the victors in the war would be unable to overthrow it.

The Japanese began at once to make use of their opportunity. On September 5 Sir R. Craigie, British Ambassador at Tokyo, was given a note of 'friendly advice' that the belligerents should withdraw their military forces from those parts of China occupied by the Japanese. The British Government left this 'friendly advice' unanswered. On hearing from the United States Government that the latter intended to keep the American garrisons in China, they decided to maintain at least a token force in Tientsin. In spite of considerable excitement in Japan over British action in taking a number of German technicians

<sup>1</sup> The Japanese Government resigned on August 28, 1939, and a new Cabinet was formed by General Abe. This government was replaced in January, 1940, by a Cabinet under Admiral Yonai, with Mr. Arita as Foreign Minister.

off a Japanese ship—the *Asamu Maru*<sup>1</sup>—near to Japanese home waters in January, 1940, Japanese policy remained cautious even after the German successes in Scandinavia. As late as June 12, 1940, the Japanese Government agreed to settle by a compromise a long-standing dispute with the British Government over a large sum of silver lodged in Tientsin banks. The collapse of France, however, gave an opening which the moderates as well as the extremists in Japan could not fail to exploit. Japanese opinion expected the collapse of Great Britain to follow that of France. If Japan did not act quickly, the Germans might make peace in Europe and dispose of the Asiatic possessions of the defeated Powers without regard to Japanese interests.

The first Japanese demands were put forward bluntly and with menace through a military channel and then presented more politely by the Japanese Foreign Office. Sir R. Craigie reported on June 19 a statement from the Director of Military Intelligence to the British Military Attaché that the Japanese felt they would 'earn the obloquy of their descendents' if they did not use the chances before them. They must insist, therefore, upon the closing of the Burma Road and the frontier at Hong Kong, and the withdrawal of British troops from Shanghai. Mr. Arita put these same requests in a less brusque form.

The War Cabinet could not give an answer without consulting the Dominions and the United States. They had already decided to ask the latter whether they would announce their unwillingness to allow any change in the *status quo* in the Far East or the Pacific. The Foreign Office now instructed Lord Lothian to point out that an American declaration was even more urgent, and that the policy of refusing to negotiate a new trade treaty with Japan was no longer adequate.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office considered that the United States had to choose between two lines of policy. They might increase their pressure by enforcing a full economic embargo against Japan, or by sending American warships to Singapore. As an alternative policy, they might try to keep the Japanese from further aggression by an offer to assist in bringing about peace with China on the basis of a restoration of Chinese independence and territory. Lord Lothian gave Mr. Hull an *aide-mémoire* in these terms on June 27. Mr. Hull replied next day that the United States Government could not accept any of the British suggestions. They had tried to restrain Japan by diplomatic pressure and economic threats, and by keeping their main fleet in the Pacific. They might have to move the fleet into the

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<sup>1</sup> The dispute over this action was settled by a compromise under which the British Government returned some of the Germans, and the Japanese agreed not to carry certain categories of Germans on their ships.

<sup>2</sup> On July 26, 1939, the United States Government had given notice of the termination in six months' time, of their Commercial Agreement of 1911 with Japan.

Atlantic; hence they could not risk war with Japan. They had also been considering the possibility of a general settlement in the Far East, but their information showed that the Japanese were determined to go on with an aggressive policy wherever they were not stopped by material opposition. Mr. Hull thought it better to acquiesce in retreats under *force majeure* in the hope of a turn of the tide, while refusing surrenders which would be irrevocable.

The Foreign Office on June 29 drew up a memorandum in the light of this reply. They considered that the political consequences of closing the Burma Road might be more serious than the economic effects; the supplies—mainly American—carried on the Road in 1939 had amounted only to 21,965 metric tons. The political consequences, however, might be to compel General Chiang Kai-shek to come to terms with Japan or to rely on Russia. Moreover Sir R. Craigie, who was strongly in favour of accepting the Japanese demand, thought nonetheless that other demands would follow.

The War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staffs considered that we could not take action which would involve us in war with Japan, and that, if we had to close the Burma Road, we had better do so, as Mr. Hull had suggested, on the basis of yielding to *force majeure*. The War Cabinet, however, accepted a Foreign Office proposal that Sir R. Craigie should be told to find out what chance there was of reaching a settlement without full acceptance of the Japanese demands. He was instructed on July 6 to explain that we could not close the Burma Road to legitimate trade without departing from neutrality and discriminating against China, and that a decision to cut off supplies to China would also, in law, oblige us to act similarly with regard to Japan, but we had no intention of taking this course.

On July 9 Lord Halifax submitted another memorandum to the War Cabinet giving reasons for thinking that a refusal of the Japanese demands would not bring 'total war' with Japan. The Japanese could not be sure that the United States would not come to our support. They were unlikely to give up their cautious methods of probing for weak points, and withdrawing if resistance were offered. Their first reaction to our refusal to close the Burma Road would probably be something in the nature of a blockade of Hong Kong, and a renewal of pressure on our economic interests in China. More forcible action would follow later, if at all. On the other hand the closing of the Road would have a most unfavourable effect on China and on American public opinion. We ought not, therefore, to give way at least until we had tried to bring about a general settlement in the Far East.

Sir R. Craigie, however, thought that there was a real danger of Japanese entry into the war. Mr. Arita had replied on July 9 that the Japanese would insist on the closing of the Road, and that further

delay might have serious consequences. Sir R. Craigie then suggested to Lord Halifax that we might agree to close the Road for three months only (i.e. over the rainy season) and on condition that during this time special efforts would be made to bring about a just and durable peace in the Far East.

The War Cabinet accepted this suggestion. The Japanese also agreed to it, though they tried to secure the omission of any public reference to the fact that the closure was for three months only.<sup>1</sup> At this point another change of government took place in Japan. The new government, under Prince Konoye, was more pro-Axis in its views. The Foreign Minister, Mr. Matsuoka, had been the Japanese delegate to the League of Nations at the time of the Japanese withdrawal from the League. He told Sir R. Craigie on July 27 that Japan 'was determined, and in fact, compelled by circumstances, to set up a new order in the Far East,' while Great Britain was 'resisting these tendencies with every means at her command . . . It was therefore difficult to see how [a] fundamental clash of interests and purpose could be avoided.'

On August 1 the new Japanese Government issued a statement on national policy. In the field of foreign policy the aims of Japan were described as, first of all, a complete settlement of the 'China affair,' and ultimately the construction of a new order in Greater East Asia. The proposed domestic changes meant the suppression of all that remained of a liberal parliamentary regime. About three-quarters of Japanese foreign trade was with the United States and the British Commonwealth and Empire; the whole structure of the Japanese economy was to be recast to fit the framework of a 'self-sufficient' *bloc* in the China and south-east Asia area under the control of Japan.<sup>2</sup>

The Foreign Office did not expect any immediate move by Japan against Great Britain,<sup>3</sup> but it was clear that the Japanese Government would not even discuss a settlement of an acceptable kind with China. Thus there was no chance of the fulfilment of the condition upon which Great Britain had agreed to the temporary closing of the

<sup>1</sup> The period was from July 18 to October 18. Mr. Hull described the closing of the Road as an unwarranted interposition of obstacles to world trade. The Foreign Office regarded Mr. Hull's statement as surprising; he had known of the proposal, and had agreed that the United States Government had no cause for complaint, since they were unwilling to commit themselves to go to war in support of Great Britain in the event of a Japanese attack. Mr. Hull explained later to Lord Lothian that the chief purpose of his statement had been to call attention to the lawless conduct of Japan.

<sup>2</sup> On July 26, 1940, the United States Government subjected to licence all exports of aviation fuel and lubricants, and certain kinds of scrap metal. This measure was obviously directed against Japan; it was not an 'embargo', and, in fact, the value of oil exports to Japan in August, 1940, was greater than that of the previous six months of 1940. The value of scrap exports in August was about equal to that of the previous six months.

<sup>3</sup> For the Prime Minister's view, see Churchill, II, 571.

Burma Road. Furthermore on September 5 the Japanese Government announced<sup>1</sup> the signature of a political agreement with the Vichy Government allowing the passage of Japanese troops through Indo-China and recognising the predominance of the political and economic interests of Japan in the Far East. Within the next three weeks, a military agreement with the French allowed the Japanese to send troops to Hanoi and Haiphong and to use certain airports north of the Red River.<sup>2</sup> On September 27 the German wireless reported the conclusion of a tripartite pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan for the creation of a 'new order' in Europe and Asia. The terms included promises of mutual aid if any one of the parties were attacked by a Power not taking part in the European war or the 'hostilities' in China. The pact was obviously directed against the United States as the only Power likely to deliver such an attack.<sup>3</sup>

These developments made it difficult to justify to opinion in Great Britain—or in the United States—a renewal of the three months' agreement about the Burma Road. The Foreign Office, and Sir R. Craigie, took the view that a refusal to extend the agreement would not lead to war with Japan. They recommended that we should tell the Japanese Government that our purpose in making the agreement had not been realised, and that, so far from accepting a general settlement in the Far East, the Japanese Government had opened the way for an attack on the Chinese through Indo-China, and had signed a pact with the Axis Powers.

Sir R. Craigie told the Japanese Foreign Minister of the British decision on October 8. There were no immediate Japanese 'reprisals.' It seemed clear that the Japanese had been impressed by the British air successes and the German failure to invade Great Britain. They were also influenced by the American economic action on September 26—before the announcement of the tripartite pact—in extending to all grades of iron and steel scrap the order forbidding export except under licence. The announcement, on September 25, of another American loan to China was also a sign that the United States did not intend to give up support of General Chiang Kai-shek.

The Foreign Office indeed continued to watch with anxiety every

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<sup>1</sup> The general nature of the Japanese demands with regard to Indo-China, and the decision of the Vichy Government to accept them, had been known for some weeks before this announcement.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. in Tonkin.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Hull issued an official statement that the signature of the pact did not 'substantially alter a situation which has existed for several years.' He told Lord Lothian on September 30 that the pact would make no difference to the American policy of aid to Great Britain. In view of the greater advantages which the pact seemed to offer to Germany, the Foreign Office was not altogether sure whether the initiative in concluding it came from Japan. Sir R. Craigie reported information from a good source that, although Japan also wanted the pact, the initiative came from Germany, and was due to German fear of attack by Russia.

move in American policy and to respond to every chance of co-operation. Mr. Hull, in his conversation of September 30 with Lord Lothian, said that the United States Government had not thought it possible to prevent Japanese encroachments upon Indo-China, and that he could not give a pledge of American support if the reopening of the Burma Road led to a Japanese attack. Nonetheless he asked whether the British, Australian, and Netherlands Governments had discussed plans for common action, and what were the facts about their common resources. Lord Lothian was instructed on October 5 to say that we would welcome a conference of representatives of the United States and the other Governments concerned. The matter was left open, but on October 7 Mr. Hull said that discussions on the problems of common defence—without committing the Governments concerned—should take place as soon as possible. The British Government suggested that, in addition to discussions in London and Washington, United States representatives might attend a Defence Conference about to be held at Singapore. Lord Lothian found, however, two days later, that Mr. Hull had changed his mind about procedure, and in any case did not want American representation at a conference. Lord Lothian thought that the change was due to reasons of domestic policy. The press would certainly hear of a conference, and Mr. Roosevelt's opponents would allege that he was deliberately provoking war.<sup>1</sup>

(ii)

*Mr. Matsuoka's visit to Europe: British proposals for an Anglo-American-Dutch warning to Japan: Japanese moves in Indo-China: American economic action against Japan: Japanese proposals to the United States (January–August, 1941).*

At the end of 1940 the 'rhythm' of Japanese policy was clear. In retrospect it is easy to see the fundamental error behind this policy, even though it won great temporary successes. The Japanese army and the politicians who supported the military extremists knew too little of the outside world, and there was a time-lag in all their judgments. They concluded the Tripartite Pact within a few days of the failure of the German air force to prepare the way for an invasion of Great Britain; they attacked the United States within a few days

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<sup>1</sup> After the Presidential election the President agreed to secret 'non-binding' Anglo-American staff conversations in Washington. These conversations, which covered the whole strategical field, began at the end of January, 1941, and continued until the end of March. See *Grand Strategy*, II, 423–7.

after the failure of the German army to reach Moscow and to break Russian resistance. They went on talking of a 'new order' in Asia long after the manifest failure of the Germans to establish a 'new order' in Europe.

The nemesis of Japanese miscalculation lay, however, in the future. The immediate situation was one of great danger for Great Britain, and, increasingly, for the United States. British policy, therefore, in 1941, as in 1940, aimed at deterring Japan as long as possible from entering the war, and increasing her difficulties if she did so. This policy continued to require close collaboration with the United States. At the end of January, 1941, the Japanese seemed about to renew their southward move. The Japanese Government insisted on their mediation in a territorial dispute between the Vichy Government and Thailand.<sup>1</sup> There was reason to suppose that they were intending to use this mediation as a means of increasing their control of Indo-China, and possibly getting a military agreement with Thailand for action against British and Dutch territories. Mr. Eden therefore spoke on February 7 in strong terms to the Japanese Ambassador. He said that we would not give way to Japanese claims to domination in the Far East, and that we should defend ourselves against Japanese attack. We were now sure that, with our own resources and an increasing amount of American help, we should win the war.

The United States Government also had information about the probability of a Japanese move in February. President Roosevelt told Lord Halifax on February 8 that American public opinion would be unlikely to approve a declaration of war on Japan unless the latter attacked American territory. In any case a campaign in the Pacific would be a dangerous diversion of resources from the main theatre of operations in the west. Mr. Roosevelt had been considering what he could do to deter Japan. He felt that he was 'through with bluffing,' and that the Japanese well knew the limitations of possible American action. He might issue a further warning to American nationals to leave the Far East<sup>2</sup> or he might send six or eight more submarines to Manila or tell Admiral Nomura, the new Japanese Ambassador, who was arriving in a few days, that he hoped that the rumours about impending Japanese action were untrue since it would be a pity if the Ambassador had to leave almost at once.

On February 11 Mr. Eden instructed Lord Halifax to point out to the State Department that, if Japan, under German pressure,

<sup>1</sup> The Thai claims were mainly for the return of territory which had been annexed by France.

<sup>2</sup> The United States Government had issued a warning early in October, 1940, that American women and children should leave China and Japan. Mr. Hull described this warning as the best way of bringing home to Japan that the United States 'meant business.'



should force us into war, we might have to move our fleet temporarily from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. This move would prolong the war and make ultimate success impossible without full American participation. The initiative lay with Japan; we alone could not keep her from aggression. We thought that the best deterrent would be a joint Anglo-American declaration that any attack on our own or the Dutch possessions in the Far East would involve Japan in war with the United States as well as the British Empire. We realised that the United States Government would hardly go as far as a statement on these lines, but Mr. Hopkins had suggested that Mr. Roosevelt might make plain 'in words of one syllable' American interests in the Far East.<sup>1</sup>

For a short time, however, the situation seemed a little easier. Mr. Eden's statement to the Japanese Ambassador seems to have had some effect. Mr. Matsuoka gave Sir R. Craigie on February 15 a copy of a memorandum which the Japanese Ambassador in London had been instructed to present to the Foreign Office. The memorandum was on the usual Japanese lines, and included a personal message from Mr. Matsuoka asserting the peaceful nature of Japanese aims. Mr. Matsuoka said that Japan was prepared to act as mediator 'not only in Greater East Asia, but anywhere the world over.' The Foreign Office, though in no doubt about Mr. Matsuoka's insincerity, considered it desirable to reply to this offer. Hence on February 24 the Prime Minister sent an answer explaining why we were fighting Germany and also why we hoped to defeat her. Mr. Churchill wrote that there was no question of mediation or compromise.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Matsuoka indeed retracted his offer—probably owing to German displeasure—on February 21. On February 27 he addressed a memorandum to the Prime Minister to the effect that he had not intended to suggest acting as mediator between the belligerents. He was merely stating his views in a general and abstract manner and in order to make clear the attitude of Japan towards the problems of peace.

Mr. Matsuoka himself now came on a visit to Europe. He told Sir R. Craigie on February 27 that he wanted to find out what kind of Europe his Allies desired to establish at the end of the war. Sir R. Craigie pointed out to him that the visit would increase the strain

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister sent a personal message to President Roosevelt on February 15 reinforcing the arguments used by Lord Halifax. For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 157-8. Mr. Roosevelt had already seen Admiral Nomura, and, according to Mr. Hull, had used 'friendly but very straight terms' in telling him that the Government and people of the United States were strongly opposed to Japanese methods of aggression. Mr. Roosevelt had made it clear that another Japanese move might lead to war with the United States.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister gave a copy of his reply to the Japanese Ambassador. For a record of his conversation with the Ambassador, see Churchill, III, 159.

on Anglo-Japanese relations because it would be assumed that he had come to reinforce the Tripartite Pact in a sense still more favourable to his Allies. Mr. Matsuoka left Tokyo on March 12. The Prime Minister decided to send him a message during his visit, but the arrangements for the delivery of the message broke down and Mr. Matsuoka received it only on April 2 from Sir S. Cripps in Moscow. The message consisted of a series of questions which the Japanese Government might put to themselves about the future course of the war, with the implication that Japan would be well advised to alter her policy in order to avoid a serious catastrophe.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office thought that the real purpose of Mr. Matsuoka's visit was to persuade Hitler to put pressure on Russia to come to terms with Japan and give up the support of General Chiang Kai-shek. In fact Mr. Matsuoka obtained a neutrality agreement from the Soviet Government on April 13. This agreement left the Russians free to meet the increasing German threat from the west; it also left the Japanese—as far as they could trust Russian promises—free to make another southward move. Reports of Japanese troop concentrations suggested that the move might take place at once, and that it might be directed against Singapore. In these circumstances the British Government decided again to raise the question of a joint or parallel declaration by Great Britain, the United States, and the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup>

The United States and the Netherlands Governments still thought that a public declaration would be too provocative, and for the time the British Government again accepted their views. The Japanese did not begin any new military move, but the situation remained uncertain and dangerous. On the night of May 17–18 Lord Halifax reported a conversation with Mr. Hull which led at first to some disquiet in London. Mr. Hull said that when Admiral Nomura had come to Washington he had raised the question of an agreement with the United States and of a settlement with China on terms which did not appear unreasonable, i.e. a recognition of the independence of China and the withdrawal of the Japanese forces. Admiral Nomura had said that he spoke with the assent of the naval and military chiefs, and hoped to get the support of the Emperor and of all the members of the Cabinet except Mr. Matsuoka. He had now obtained their support. Mr. Hull did not think that there was

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, III, 167–8. The final questions were as follows: 'Is it true that the production of steel in the United States during 1941 will be 75 million tons, and in Great Britain about 12½? . . . If Germany should happen to be defeated, as she was last time, would not the 7 million tons steel production of Japan be inadequate for a single-handed war?'

<sup>2</sup> On April 25 the Japanese Ambassador brought to Mr. Eden a polite but unpromising reply from Mr. Matsuoka to the Prime Minister's letter. Mr. Matsuoka said that Japanese policy had been decided after the most careful consideration, and that it would be carried out.

much chance of success; but, if there were only one chance in twenty-five, he ought to listen to any further approach. The Foreign Office had reason to believe that Mr. Matsuoka himself was sponsoring this approach, and that his aim was to separate the policy of the United States from that of Great Britain, retain Manchukuo and the Japanese position in Thailand and Indo-China, and allow Japan to withdraw from China with the least possible loss of face. Lord Halifax was instructed on May 21 to put the British view to Mr. Hull. Although Mr. Hull did not take kindly to what he called a 'lecture' from the British Government, he repeated that he did not himself expect the talks to succeed. The talks had not produced any result before the Japanese moved into southern Indo-China.

Meanwhile the Secretary of State was considering once more the question of a public declaration. The Netherlands Government wanted assurances of British support in the event of an attack on the Dutch East Indies. The War Cabinet thought it undesirable to enter into any commitments unless the United States made a public declaration that they also would join a defence agreement, but they could not refuse the Dutch request. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed on May 22 to tell Mr. Hull that we intended to make a public declaration unless the United States Government saw serious objection to it. The declaration would welcome the determination of the Netherlands Government to resist attack in the East Indies,<sup>1</sup> and would state that Great Britain would regard an attack on any part of the line from Malaya to New Zealand through the East Indies as a threat to British interests. Mr. Hull did not object if the statement were not in provocative terms; he was afraid that, whatever the terms, the Japanese extremists would read provocation into them. The Dominion Governments also had doubts about a public statement, especially without American participation. Sir R. Craigie's opinion was that, in view of a deadlock in the economic negotiations between the Netherlands Government and Japan,<sup>2</sup> a public declaration might 'just touch off an explosion.' Sir R. Craigie suggested that he should tell Mr. Matsuoka that he hoped he would succeed in preventing an attack on the Dutch East Indies, since Great Britain would be necessarily concerned as an ally of the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. van Kleffens had made a broadcast statement to this effect on May 6.

<sup>2</sup> These negotiations—mainly over export quotas for tin and rubber—had begun in September, 1940. No agreement had been reached by the end of June. The British Government had refused a request by Mr. Matsuoka on May 22 for their 'good offices' in persuading the Netherlands Government to accept the Japanese demands.

<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office instructed Sir R. Craigie not to use the words 'automatically involved' since so definite a statement could not be made without further consultation with the Dominions. Mr. Eden told the Netherlands Government on August 1 that the British Government would do their utmost to assist in safeguarding the Netherlands East Indies in the event of an attack, though they must remain 'sole judge' of what action or military measures on their part might be practicable. This statement was confirmed in writing on September 5.

The German attack on Russia brought a new turn in the situation. Sir R. Craigie telegraphed on June 24 that the German Ambassador at Tokyo was offering Japan the Russian Far Eastern Maritime provinces in return for Japanese assistance. The Foreign Office view was that for the time Japan would remain neutral, and that it was better not to try to influence her decision. On the other hand she was likely to use the opportunity to make a southward move, probably to secure bases in Indo-China. The problem once again was to decide upon measures which would be a warning to Japan without actually provoking her to war.

The Foreign Office and the State Department had information early in July that Japan was likely to move within a few weeks. Mr. Welles told Lord Halifax that the United States Government had decided not to make any further communication of a 'mandatory kind' to the Japanese until they had committed some 'overt act.' As soon as such an act had taken place, the United States would impose an embargo on the principal materials imported by Japan. On July 19 Mr. Welles said that the United States might freeze all Japanese assets and thus bring to a standstill all trade between the United States and Japan except by special licence. The United States Government did not ask the British Government to take similar action, but after consultation with the Dominions, the War Cabinet decided to follow American policy and to freeze all Japanese assets. The decision had to be made quickly because Japan committed the 'overt act' to which the embargo was to be a counter-measure. On July 16 Admiral Darlan told Admiral Leahy<sup>1</sup> that the French had just learned of the Japanese intention to occupy southern Indo-China. Five days later Admiral Darlan said that his Government had been compelled to accept a demand for eight air and two naval bases and freedom of movement for Japanese troops in southern Indo-China. On July 24 Mr. Welles issued a statement in very strong terms about the Japanese action, and on July 26 the freezing order was brought into effect both in the United States and Great Britain.

American official opinion, in general, did not think that the Japanese reaction to the freezing orders would go as far as an attack on British or Dutch possessions. Nevertheless the British Government had to take this possibility into account. They had not wished to increase the risks of attack without at the same time getting a promise of American support. They had now acted without this promise, since it would have been difficult for them to have attached conditions to their decision to keep level with the United States. The constitutional position in the United States made it impossible for the President to give any definite assurance of support, and anything less

<sup>1</sup> The United States Government knew earlier—through intercepted Japanese messages—of the demands upon the French.

than a clear promise would have been more embarrassing than helpful. The War Cabinet considered that, if the case arose, American support would be forthcoming, and that the best time to ask for it would be when war seemed imminent.

The Australian Government, however, thought that the question should be raised at once, and that, in view of the action already taken, it could not be regarded as limiting the extent to which Great Britain and the Dominions would cooperate with the United States in economic pressure on Japan. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed on August 1 that we proposed to point out that the security of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies depended on the United States. Australia and New Zealand—at risk to themselves—had sent important contingents to the Middle East. They now saw the Japanese taking up positions threatening Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. The United States Government would understand why they wanted some ‘indication that in the last resort the United States would be at their side.’ We recognised the difficulties in the way of a formal commitment, but might not the President find it possible to say that in the event of a Japanese attack on British or Dutch possessions in the Far East, he would ask for the authority of Congress to come to our aid?

The War Cabinet, however, decided to postpone this approach through the State Department<sup>1</sup> because Mr. Winant suggested that it would be better for the Prime Minister to raise the question himself with the President during their forthcoming meeting.<sup>2</sup> On August 10 the Prime Minister gave the President a short memorandum suggesting ‘parallel’ communications to Japan by the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands that any further encroachment by Japan in the south-west Pacific would result in counter-measures even though they might lead to war. Mr. Churchill hoped that the President would be willing to say that, if any third Power became the object of aggression by Japan in consequence of these counter-measures, he would seek authority from Congress to provide aid to such Power. Mr. Roosevelt made it clear on August 11 that he could not offer this assurance. On the other hand the discussions went beyond the question of a warning to Japan. The President explained to Mr. Churchill that the Japanese had now made a move towards reopening the negotiations which had broken off after the move into Indo-China.<sup>3</sup> On August 6 Admiral Nomura had given Mr. Hull

<sup>1</sup> Lord Halifax was, however, instructed to raise at once the question of a joint warning to Japan against making demands on Thailand similar to those made with regard to Indo-China. Lord Halifax was informed that the United States Government had suggested that the interested Powers should guarantee the neutrality of Thailand.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 429.

<sup>3</sup> The Japanese Government had resigned on July 16. Sir R. Craigie reported that their resignation had been a means of getting rid of Mr. Matsuoka, whose policy had been discredited by the German attack on Russia. Prince Konoye formed a new administration, with Admiral Toyoda as Foreign Minister.

proposals to the effect that Japan would not station troops anywhere in the south-west Pacific except in Indo-China, and would withdraw her troops from Indo-China after the settlement of the China 'incident.' The United States would recognise the special status of Japan in French Indo-China and Japan would also guarantee the neutrality of the Philippines. The United States would suspend military measures in the south-west Pacific area, and advise the British and Dutch to do the same; the United States would restore normal trade relations with Japan, and would use its good offices for the initiation of direct negotiations between Japan and China.

The President proposed to say that he would discuss these proposals on condition that during the discussions the Japanese did not extend their occupation of Indo-China or use Indo-China as a base of operations against the Chinese. He agreed to add a warning that any further move by Japan would 'produce a situation in which the United States Government would be compelled to take counter-measures even though these might lead to war between the United States and Japan.' Mr. Roosevelt told the Prime Minister that he thought the Japanese conditions 'fundamentally unacceptable,' but that it was desirable to gain a month's time in which we could improve our position in Singapore. The Prime Minister agreed to the resumption of discussions, though he regarded it as essential that the economic measures against Japan should continue in full force.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office did not regard this plan as altogether satisfactory because the proposed warning was not in itself an assurance of American help in the event of war with Japan arising out of a Japanese attack on British or Dutch possessions. In any case the matter became confused because the Foreign Office found on August 23 that the President had not given his warning in the terms agreed with the Prime Minister. The President's words were as follows: 'This (i.e. the United States) Government now finds it necessary to say to the Government of Japan that if the Japanese Government takes any further steps in pursuance of a policy or programme of military domination by force or threat of force of neighbouring countries, the Government of the United States will be compelled to take immediately any and all the steps . . . necessary towards safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the United States and American nationals, and towards ensuring the safety and security of the United States.'

The President had not used the word 'war,' and had made no reference to Great Britain. It was therefore necessary to reconsider the terms of the British 'parallel' warning. In a broadcast of August 24

<sup>1</sup> For the Prime Minister's telegram to Mr. Eden giving an account of the conversation with the President, see Churchill, III, 389-91. The War Cabinet on August 12 endorsed the Prime Minister's action.



the Prime Minister said that Japanese expansionist activities could not be allowed to go on, and that, in the event of failure of American efforts to bring about an amicable settlement in the Far East, Great Britain would be at the side of the United States if the latter were involved in war with Japan. The Prime Minister did not state explicitly that any further southward move by Japan would be followed by British counter-measures. Lord Halifax was, however, instructed on August 27 to tell the United States Government that we felt it necessary to warn Japan that counter-measures would be taken. Lord Halifax was given two draft formulae to shew to Mr. Hull. Mr. Hull advised against the use of the word 'war,' and suggested that the warning should not relate only to the south-west Pacific area, but should be in more general terms against the continuance of a policy of expansion by force. Mr. Hull also said that messages on August 28 from Prince Konoye had made the resumption of negotiations possible. He thought that the chances of a general settlement were one in twenty-five or fifty, but that anyhow we should be gaining time.

The Foreign Office thought that Mr. Hull's comments made it necessary at least to postpone the warning. We had used the word 'war' because we wanted to make it clear to the Japanese that any further move in the south-west Pacific would mean war: a general warning, which would apply to a move in any part of China, might commit us to more than we intended. There was, however, considerable force in the American argument that a warning limited to the south-west Pacific might give the Japanese the impression that they could attack the U.S.S.R. without risk. In any case a warning in general terms would add nothing to the Prime Minister's broadcast and might even detract from its force.

(iii)

*Final American negotiations with Japan: British attitude towards the Japanese proposals and American counter-proposals: breakdown of negotiations: the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbour (September-December, 1941).*

On September 26, 1941, the Japanese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, told Sir R. Craigie that the extremists in Japan, with German support, were doing all they could to wreck Prince Konoye's plans for a settlement in the Far East. This statement seemed borne out by the fall of Prince Konoye's Government on October 16 over the



issue of the Washington negotiations.<sup>1</sup> At this time same the Soviet Government, in view of the German threat to Moscow, had moved east to Kuibyshev. The Foreign Office now considered that the Japanese might assume that they could make a move in the north, where they already had a strong military concentration, with less risk than a move into Thailand. Even if we could do little to help the Russians, we ought to consult the United States at once, and to point out the danger not only to Russian resistance in the west, but to ourselves if we allowed Japan to attack her enemies one by one, and, after dealing with Russia, to move against us as soon as Germany was free to turn westwards.

Lord Halifax was therefore instructed on October 17 to say that the Prime Minister's broadcast of August 24 had made it clear that, if the attempt at a settlement failed, we should support the United States in war. We therefore wanted to know what the United States would do in the event of a Japanese attack on Russia. Mr. Hull's answer on October 22 shewed that the United States Government had not decided what to do in the event of such an attack. A week later Mr. Hull said that not much progress was being made in the talks with Japan and that he doubted whether the Japanese Government could hold the position much longer against the military extremists. He was inclined to warn the Japanese that action by them against Siberia would be 'proof of their desire for domination' and that the United States would be obliged to take counter-measures.

On October 29 and 30 Mr. Togo spoke to Sir R. Craigie about the Japanese negotiations with the United States.<sup>2</sup> He thought that the Americans were deliberately dragging them out, and that the Japanese could not continue them. Sir R. Craigie telegraphed his opinion that this indirect request for British intervention was genuine, and not intended primarily to make trouble between us and the United States. He was instructed to reply that we also wanted a general settlement, but that we saw no advantage in entering upon negotiations until the principles of an agreement had been decided, and that we were content to leave these preliminary discussions to the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Halifax told Mr. Welles on November 12 of Mr. Togo's

<sup>1</sup> A new administration was formed under General Tojo, and for the first time an officer on the active list became Prime Minister. The new Foreign Minister, Mr. Togo, a Foreign Office official married to a German wife, was not politically favourable to the alliance with Germany.

<sup>2</sup> Sir R. Craigie had given Mr. Togo an *aide-mémoire* referring to the warnings which he had delivered to Mr. Matsuoka on the serious results likely to follow from a Japanese move into southern Indo-China.

<sup>3</sup> In a speech of November 10, at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, the Prime Minister said that the United States was 'doing their utmost to find ways of preserving peace in the Pacific.' If, however, they became involved in war with Japan, a British declaration of war would 'follow within the hour.' For the text of the Prime Minister's speech, see Churchill, III, 528-9.

enquiry and the British reply. Meanwhile Mr. Kurusu<sup>1</sup> had left Japan for Washington on November 5 as an additional envoy. On November 18 Mr. Welles gave Lord Halifax a summary of the latest discussions. Mr. Kurusu had said that an 'explosion' might occur in Japan if an agreement were not reached. Mr. Hull had answered that the United States could not abandon certain principles. The settlement could not be linked up with the Axis, and Japan must withdraw her troops from China. Mr. Kurusu argued that opinion in Japan would not allow the immediate withdrawal of all Japanese troops. Mr. Hull said again that without a withdrawal there could be no agreement. Mr. Kurusu finally suggested a Japanese withdrawal from Indo-China in return for a relaxation of the economic pressure on Japan to the extent of sending small quantities of rice and oil.

The Foreign Office agreed with Mr. Hull's firmness in insisting that nothing should be conceded to Japan except in return for definite Japanese action. They doubted whether the Japanese would withdraw from Indo-China on the terms put forward by Mr. Kurusu, but the offer would be worth considering if it were not accompanied by unacceptable conditions. We should have to take care to avoid any suggestion of abandoning China; it therefore seemed better not to make even limited economic concessions until an understanding had been reached about an ultimate settlement in China.

The United States Government inclined to go a little further in concessions. On November 22 Mr. Hull asked Lord Halifax, the Australian and Netherlands Ministers, and the Chinese Ambassador to see him. He told them that his main purpose in holding conversations had been to strengthen the peace party in Japan and to gain time. He now thought that further delay was impossible and that the moderates must be able to shew some prospect of economic alleviation. Mr. Kurusu had brought him on November 20 proposals from the Japanese Government in the following terms: (i) the two Governments would undertake not to make any armed advance in south-east Asia or in the southern Pacific area except in the part of Indo-China where Japanese troops were already stationed. (ii) Japan would withdraw her troops from Indo-China either upon the restoration of peace with China or upon the establishment of an equitable peace in the Pacific area. Meanwhile Japan would move the troops in south Indo-China to north Indo-China on the conclusion of an *interim* settlement. (iii) The two Governments would cooperate in securing commodities needed by them from the Netherlands East Indies, and (iv) would undertake to restore their commercial relations to those existing before the freezing of assets. The United States Government would also supply Japan with a required quantity of oil. (v) The United States Government would refrain from action prejudicial to the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Kurusu had formerly been Ambassador in Berlin.

restoration of general peace between Japan and China. Mr. Hull had already noted these demands as follows: (i) would leave Japan free to act against Russia and China; (ii) the United States would require Japan to keep only a few thousand troops in any part of Indo-China; (iii) implied that the United States Government would be asked to persuade the Netherlands Government to let Japan have more oil, etc. (iv) the United States Government would not consider a complete restoration of economic relations; (v) the United States would not agree to stop sending aid to China.

In conversation Mr. Hull said to Lord Halifax that he might suggest, as an alternative to the Japanese proposals, that the United States Government, while maintaining the position on fundamental points, would be willing to consider a limited agreement, probably for not more than two or three months unless progress were made meanwhile in settling the larger questions.<sup>1</sup> The basis of the limited agreement might be that Japan would withdraw all except a few thousand of her troops from Indo-China, and that the United States, the British Commonwealth, and the Dutch would allow some relief from their present economic pressure. Lord Halifax, in reporting the conversation, said that Mr. Hull had spoken of getting Japan to agree not to make an aggressive move in any other direction. Lord Halifax was not clear whether this promise would be part of the limited agreement. Mr. Hull believed that his plan had an 'outside chance' of success, but he was not hopeful. Later in the day he telephoned to ask Lord Halifax whether the British, Australian, and Netherlands Governments would give their representatives in Washington authority to decide upon the amount of economic relief which should be granted to Japan.

The Prime Minister inclined at first to let Mr. Hull have the latitude for which he asked. Our major interest in regard to Japan was 'no further encroachments, and no war.' We could be sure that the United States would not throw over the Chinese; they were also unlikely to allow a Japanese attack on Russia. Subject to these conditions Mr. Churchill thought it worth while 'to ease up upon Japan economically sufficiently for them to live from hand to mouth—even if we only got another three months.'<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office did not wish to accept Mr. Hull's plan without considerable modification. They regarded the Japanese proposals as showing that Japan wanted the speedy removal of economic pressure,<sup>3</sup> but not the

<sup>1</sup> Mr Hull read quickly to Lord Halifax a memorandum on the possible terms of an 'all-round' Pacific settlement.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's minute to Mr. Eden on November 23, see Churchill, III, 529.

<sup>3</sup> The economic pressure on Japan was severe. Practically all trade between the United States and Japan had now ceased, and a similar position had been reached with regard to trade between Japan and the British and Dutch possessions. See Medlicott, II, ch. III.

speedy settlement of anything else. They noted the special emphasis on oil of which Japan had no shortage except for war purposes. The only offer made by Japan was to move her troops from one part of Indo-China to another. Thus the proposals should not be accepted, and the question was whether to reject them without closing the door to a better Japanese offer or to take the initiative in counter-proposals.

Lord Halifax was instructed on the night of November 24-5 to say that we had complete confidence in Mr. Hull's handling of the negotiations and thought him the best judge of the next step. Mr. Hull would understand that the Japanese would try to force a hurried decision. If he considered it desirable to put forward a counter-proposal, we would support his decision, though the State Department would have realised that the Japanese would use any agreement as a kind of triumph for themselves, and make capital out of it, especially by trying to convince the Chinese that they had been betrayed. In any case the Japanese proposals were an opening move in a process of bargaining; their demands were put at a maximum, and their offer at a minimum. If a counter-proposal were made, this process should be reversed. Mr. Hull's counter-proposal did not require enough to justify the relaxation of economic pressure. We ought to ask for the total withdrawal from Indo-China not merely of Japanese 'troops,' but of naval, military, and air forces with their equipment, and for the suspension of further military advances in China. We should also require assurances about other areas in south-east Asia, the southern Pacific, and the U.S.S.R. In return we might offer a limited export of goods required by the Japanese civilian population, but not goods of 'war potential', e.g. oil. These relaxations would come into effect as and when the withdrawal of Japanese armed forces took place. On the question of giving full authority to our representatives in Washington, the Secretary of State pointed out that our economic structure was very complicated, and that we had to consult other members of the Commonwealth. We could not give *carte blanche* to our diplomatic representatives until we had decided more definitely what goods we could allow Japan to import, and whether we should work through the machinery of financial control or by barter.

Meanwhile, on November 24, Lord Halifax, again in company with the Australian and Netherlands Ministers, and the Chinese Ambassador, saw Mr. Hull. Lord Halifax telegraphed an account of this interview on the morning of November 25,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hull had shewn him the draft of a document which, after revision, he proposed to give to the Japanese. The preamble consisted of general principles,

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was received at 4.50 p.m. on November 25.

such as the preservation of territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, and equality of economic opportunity, which should govern a settlement. The document described the Japanese proposals as containing features in conflict with these principles. The United States Government, however, wanted to continue the discussions, and put forward a *modus vivendi* as follows: (i) the two Governments would declare that they had no territorial designs in the Pacific area; (ii) they would undertake not to make, from regions in which they had military establishments, an advance by force or threat of force into any area of south-east or north-east<sup>1</sup> Asia or any part of the Pacific area; (iii) Japan would withdraw, and not replace, her armed forces in southern Indo-China, and reduce the total number of her forces in Indo-China to 25,000; (iv) the United States would allow all imports from Japan, provided that two-thirds per month of such imports were of raw silk. Exports from the United States to Japan would include food, medical supplies, and oil for civilian use.<sup>2</sup> The amount of exports might be increased if it appeared that the interim agreement was furthering a peaceful settlement. (v) The United States would approach the British, Australian, and Netherlands Governments with a view to similar economic concessions on their part. (vi) The United States reaffirmed its fundamental interest that a settlement between Japan and China should be based on the principles of peace, law, order, and justice. (vii) The *modus vivendi* would last for three months, and could be extended.

Mr. Hull, in answer to questions from Lord Halifax, said that point (ii) was intended to cover Soviet territory, and point (iii) an attack on the Burma Road.<sup>3</sup> The Chinese Ambassador asked that 'south-east Asia' in point (ii) should include China. Mr. Hull thought it impossible to get the Japanese to agree to suspend operations in China. Mr. Hull said that he wanted to present the *modus vivendi* at once. Lord Halifax hoped that he could wait for the views of the British Government; if, however, he felt bound to go ahead, we would trust his discretion and give him full support.<sup>4</sup>

On the morning of November 25 Lord Halifax spoke to Mr. Hull in the sense of the instructions which he had received during the previous night. Mr. Hull agreed that 'troops' should include all arms; he did not think he could ask for a total withdrawal from Indo-China or the suspension of advances in China. He agreed that the

<sup>1</sup> An earlier revised draft of the *modus vivendi* printed in *Foreign Relations of the U.S.*, 1941, vol. IV, p. 643, refers to 'north-western' Asia.

<sup>2</sup> The draft also mentioned cotton. There is no reference to cotton in Lord Halifax's report, but the President included it in his message of November 24-5 to the Prime Minister.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. 25,000 troops were too few for an invasion of Yunnan.

<sup>4</sup> It should be remembered that during these critical negotiations the United States Government were aware through intercepted messages of the Japanese preparations for attack.

Japanese were deliberately withholding oil from civilian use in order to stir up resentment. For this reason he thought it desirable to give some relief to the civilian population. In any case not much oil could reach Japan in three months. He spoke of the possibility of excluding oil of the highest grade, and pointed out that, although there would be strong feeling about oil concessions, the balance of opinion would be on the other side if negotiations broke down over 'a few barrels of oil' and war followed.

Mr. Hull said that he would probably accompany his communication to the Japanese with some general statement about a wider settlement. Lord Halifax reminded him that the British Government had not seen this statement. Mr. Hull said that, if it became a matter of practical discussion, he would consult the British Government. He repeated that the whole defensive situation of the United States in the Pacific depended on gaining time.

The Foreign Office were not reassured by fuller knowledge of Mr. Hull's proposals. During the night of November 24-5 Mr. Roosevelt had sent a message to the Prime Minister explaining the *modus vivendi*. Mr. Roosevelt said that the 'proposition' was a fair one for Japan, but that its acceptance or rejection was 'really a matter of internal Japanese politics.' He was 'not very hopeful,' and thought that 'we must all be prepared for real trouble, possibly soon.' The Prime Minister replied on the night of November 25-6 that we left the President to handle the question. We did not want an additional war, but were disquieted by the possibility that the *modus vivendi* might have a bad effect on Chinese morale. Mr. Churchill thought that General Chiang Kai-shek was 'having a very thin diet' on the American plan, and that a Chinese collapse would 'enormously increase' our joint dangers.<sup>1</sup>

The Dutch also felt doubts about the plan, but the strongest opposition came from the Chinese. General Chiang Kai-shek sent messages in vehement terms to Mr. Roosevelt.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Soong, General Chiang Kai-shek's brother-in-law, was in Washington, and went to see the President during the afternoon of November 26. Mr. Soong said that the Chinese would rather retain the economic embargo, with the risk of an attack on the Burma Road, than choose the *modus vivendi*. If the United States gave up the embargo, there would be a collapse of morale not only in China but throughout Asia.

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's reply, see Churchill, III, 530.

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed concern about the proposals to Sir A. Clark Kerr, British Ambassador at Chungking; he did not ask the British Government to take any steps in the matter. On December 2 the Secretary of State considered instructing Lord Halifax to tell Mr. Hull that we had received no representations from the Chinese, since Mr. Hull seemed to think that we had been speaking for the Chinese when we mentioned our doubts about the *modus vivendi*.



During the night of November 26-7 Lord Halifax reported that Mr. Hull had given the Japanese the general statement to which he had referred, but not the *modus vivendi*. Lord Halifax concluded that Mr. Soong's arguments, and perhaps the view of the President, had caused the abandonment of the *modus vivendi*; Mr. Hull had felt it necessary to give the Japanese something, and had therefore handed them the general statement. Lord Halifax thought that Mr. Hull ought not to have acted in this way without showing the British Government so important a document, but that no harm would have been done.<sup>1</sup> On the morning of November 27 Lord Halifax asked Mr. Welles whether the idea of a *modus vivendi* had now been abandoned. Mr. Welles said that in view of the sharp Chinese reaction, and of the little support received from the British Government, Mr. Hull was not inclined to go on with his proposal. Lord Halifax pointed out that we had made comments and suggestions in response to an invitation to do so, but that we had in fact promised our full support to the plan. Mr. Welles said that the Prime Minister's message did not give this impression.<sup>2</sup>

On November 28 the United States naval authorities informed the Admiralty of instructions sent to the American naval commanders-in-chief that negotiations had broken down, and that Japan might attack within the next few days. The Foreign Office had not received any report from Lord Halifax of the breakdown of negotiations. They telegraphed to Lord Halifax at once, and heard from him during the course of the day that Mr. Hull had told Mr. Casey that nothing of consequence had happened at a meeting between the President and the Japanese representatives. Later Mr. Welles informed Lord Halifax that the President had left Washington for Warm Springs until December 4. Mr. Welles said that the instructions sent out by the Navy Department had been based on the expectation—which the State Department shared—that the Japanese would not accept the communication given them by Mr. Hull. Mr. Welles shewed Lord Halifax the record of the President's conversation with the Japanese. The conversation was in general terms. Mr. Roosevelt had said that the United States could not make large economic concessions to Japan until the latter had given clear evidence of peaceful intentions. If this evidence were forthcoming, the United States would respond

<sup>1</sup> On the night of November 27-8 the Foreign Office telegraphed to Lord Halifax that they wanted to know as soon as possible the substance of the general statement given to the Japanese. They were uncertain—from Lord Halifax's telegrams—whether it was a mere recital of principles on the lines of the preamble to the *modus vivendi* (see pp. 181-2) or something more comprehensive as suggested in Lord Halifax's telegram of November 22 (see p. 180). Lord Halifax replied that the statement was that mentioned in the telegram of November 22.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hull told Mr. Casey on November 27 that he blamed the Chinese principally for the dropping of the *modus vivendi*, though he would have liked stronger British and Dutch support. Mr. Casey suggested further discussion with the Chinese Ambassador, but Mr. Hull thought that it was now too late.



to it. Mr. Hull told Lord Halifax on the morning of November 29 that the situation had not changed, but that he expected early Japanese action. Lord Halifax had received, meanwhile, a telegram from the Foreign Office about the British attitude towards the *modus vivendi*. The British and the Dominion Governments had been unable to estimate the urgency of the situation, and had had to rely on the judgment of the United States Government. They had approved of the attempt to reach an interim agreement with Japan, but had felt uneasy that the American counter-proposals were so favourable to Japan, and left no room for bargaining. The terms also seemed to take too little account of the Chinese reactions. The Foreign Office hoped that Mr. Hull would now take us fully into his confidence and allow time for us to consider any further proposals before they were put to the Japanese. We still thought it wise to aim at an *interim* agreement on the lines we had suggested.

Lord Halifax put these views to Mr. Hull, but Mr. Hull saw no hope of reviving the *modus vivendi*. He spoke with some bitterness of the 'unbalanced advice' sent by Mr. Soong to General Chiang Kai-shek, and of a leakage through Mr. Soong to the press.<sup>1</sup> He gave Lord Halifax an account of the document which he had presented to the Japanese.<sup>2</sup> He also mentioned the importance of the Service Departments preparing themselves for war with Japan.

During the early hours of November 30 the Prime Minister sent a message to the United States Embassy for transmission to the President<sup>3</sup> suggesting a plain declaration by the United States to the effect that any further act of aggression by Japan would lead immediately to the gravest consequences. We would make a similar declaration, or join in the American declaration.<sup>4</sup> Lord Halifax had also received instructions to tell the United States Government that we expected a Japanese attack on Thailand, and that this attack would include an expedition to seize strategic points in the Kra Isthmus. We proposed to counter this plan by a rapid move into the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hull said that, owing to Mr. Soong's influence, Mr. Stimson, who had previously been strongly in favour of measures to gain time, was now supporting the Chinese view.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Halifax asked whether he could have a copy of the document. Mr. Hull was willing to give him a copy, but could not find one on his table. Lord Halifax later wrote to Mr. Hull asking for a copy to send to Mr. Eden. He was not given a copy until the afternoon of December 2. The Foreign Office had instructed Lord Halifax for the second time to ask for a copy. For the text, see *For. Rels. of U.S., Japan, 1931-41*, II, 768-70.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Roosevelt, at Mr. Hull's suggestion, was returning to Washington. He arrived on December 1. For the text of the Prime Minister's message, see Churchill, III, 533.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Halifax reported on November 30 that the Japanese representatives had asked, through Mr. Casey, whether he could receive them. Lord Halifax telegraphed to the Foreign Office that, even if Mr. Hull saw no objection, he thought that a meeting would be 'unprofitable and dangerous' since it would become known, and might give the appearance of a difference of view between Great Britain and the United States. Mr. Eden agreed with Lord Halifax, but instructed him to tell Mr. Hull before he refused the Japanese request, since we did not want to lay ourselves open to the charge of unwillingness, at any stage in the negotiations, to give all the help in our power.

Isthmus.<sup>1</sup> We wanted to be sure that we should get American support.

Mr. Hull was unwell on December 1, though he telephoned to Lord Halifax that he had seen the Japanese representatives. They had no new instructions from Tokyo, and had spoken, presumably on their own responsibility, about the question of an *interim* agreement.<sup>2</sup> In the afternoon of December 1 the President had a long conversation with Lord Halifax, at which Mr. Hopkins was also present.<sup>3</sup> The President said that he had been considering a parallel statement by the two Governments, but thought it better to begin by making a communication to Japan in the form of questions about the latest movement of Japanese troops, i.e. (i) where were they going, and (ii) if they were going to Indo-China, what was their purpose. Lord Halifax asked what would be the next step, since the Japanese reply would be an evasive one or a lie.

The President thought that the two Governments should settle what they would do in the various situations which might arise. In the case of a direct attack on ourselves or on the Dutch, Mr. Roosevelt said that 'we should obviously all be together,' but he wanted to be clear about 'matters that were less plain.' He therefore asked Lord Halifax to find out the intentions of the British Government (i) if the Japanese reply to these questions were unsatisfactory, but the reinforcements had not reached Indo-China, (ii) if the reply were unsatisfactory, and the troops had reached Indo-China, (iii) if the Japanese moved against Thailand without attacking the Kra Isthmus or if they did no more than enforce concessions from Thailand of a kind 'dangerously detrimental to the general position.' (Lord Halifax, in reporting the conversation, said that he thought the United States would support whatever action we might take in any of these cases.)

The President said that we could count on American support if we carried out our move to defend the Kra Isthmus in the event of a Japanese attack, though this support might not be forthcoming for a few days. He suggested that we should promise the Thai Government that, if they resisted Japanese attack or infiltration, we would respect and guarantee for the future their full sovereignty and independence. The President said that the United States constitution did not allow him to give such a guarantee, but we could be sure that our guarantee

<sup>1</sup> We should thereby secure the aerodrome at Singora, the port facilities, the east and west railway, and the road. The Isthmus was waterlogged during the rainy season (November–February); there would, however, be great tactical advantages in seizing it before the arrival of the Japanese.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hull said that he had repeated that the United States could not meet the Japanese demands for oil, for stopping aid to China, and for keeping more than a token number of troops in Indo-China. Mr. Roosevelt told Lord Halifax that Mr. Hull had said to the Japanese envoys that *interim* arrangements were not possible on a unilateral basis, i.e. while the Japanese continued to move troops.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Halifax later saw Mr. Welles.

would have full American support. Mr. Roosevelt believed that there was complete understanding between Berlin and Tokyo and that there was no chance of a *modus vivendi*. He was thinking of sending a letter to the Emperor in friendly terms, but stating that a continuation of the present Japanese policy would mean war.

The Secretary of State replied on the evening of December 3 to Mr. Roosevelt's question that we knew Japanese reinforcements to be arriving in Indo-China, and that, if the Japanese reply to the President's enquiry were unsatisfactory, the United States, British, and Netherlands Government should warn Japan that if she used Indo-China as a base for further aggression, she would do so 'at her peril.' If the warning were ignored and the Japanese attacked, or threatened to attack the Kra Isthmus, our plan—on the assumption that we should get American armed support—was to advance along the Isthmus to a point north of Singora. If we were sure of American support we would make this advance in the case of a Japanese attack on Thailand elsewhere than in the Kra Isthmus. We could not give direct help elsewhere to the Thais, and could hardly ask them to resist Japan in return for a guarantee, since we should, in effect, be asking them 'to accept the virtual certainty of partial extinction in order to secure their ultimate independence.' The Thai Prime Minister had already told us that the only hope of saving Thailand was by an Anglo-American warning to Japan.

The President had not received from the Japanese an answer to his enquiry when he discussed this British reply with Lord Halifax on the evening of December 3.<sup>1</sup> He said that, when talking of support, he meant 'armed support,' and that he agreed with the British plan for operations in the Kra Isthmus if the Japanese attacked Thailand (Lord Halifax, in his telegram, was sure that we could count on 'armed support' if we undertook the operation), but that he expected their attack to be directed against the Dutch East Indies. He wanted to know, before deciding upon a simultaneous warning, whether we meant by 'the use of Indo-China as a base for further aggression,' some act of aggression, or merely building up a base with the purpose of further aggression.

The President saw Lord Halifax late in the evening of December 4. Lord Halifax had been instructed to express our 'very deep appreciation' of the President's response and to say that we thought the warning should apply to an attack by Japan on Thailand, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, or the Burma Road (through Indo-China). Mr. Roosevelt was doubtful about including the Burma Road, but otherwise agreed to the warning. He thought that each of the three Governments should give it independently, and that the American warning should come first, since he wanted to assure opinion in the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Welles was also present at the discussion.

United States that he was acting in the interest of American defence, and not just following a British lead. He had not given up all hope of a temporary agreement with the Japanese. Mr. Kurusu had let him know indirectly that an approach to the Emperor might still secure a truce, and even lead to a settlement between Japan and China. Mr. Kurusu's plan was that the President should try to act as an 'introducer' between China and Japan with a view to their dealing directly with each other. The 'lines of settlement' might be the withdrawal of the bulk of Japanese troops from Indo-China, and a similar withdrawal from North China on an agreed timetable. The President said that the Japanese would obviously require 'some economic relief.' He did not put too much importance on Mr. Kurusu's approach, but he could not miss even the chance of a settlement. He also thought that his own case would be strengthened if he had been in communication with the Emperor. Lord Halifax said that there was some danger in postponing the warning, and suggested that the communication to the Emperor might serve as a definite warning. The President agreed with this suggestion, and said that he would decide on December 6, after getting the Japanese reply to his enquiries, whether to approach the Emperor. If he made the approach, he would hope that the three-Power warning might be postponed until he had had an answer from the Emperor. Lord Halifax was instructed on the night of December 5-6 that we agreed with all the President's proposals.<sup>1</sup>

The Japanese reply—presented on December 5—was unsatisfactory. The Japanese explained their own despatch of reinforcements as a precautionary measure against alleged Chinese reinforcements near the Indo-China border. The President then decided to send a message to be delivered to the Emperor on the morning of December 7 (Japanese time). If he had not received a reply by the evening of December 8 (Washington time), he would follow this message with a warning note to the Japanese Government in the afternoon or evening of December 9. He suggested that the British and Dutch notes of warning should be sent on December 10. If the Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> The situation with regard to Thailand was complicated because the Thai Prime Minister—who expected an attack within the next few days—asked on December 5 for an immediate declaration that we should go to war with Japan if the latter attacked Thailand. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed on December 6 to tell Mr. Roosevelt that Mr. Churchill proposed to send the Thai Prime Minister a message telling the Thais to defend themselves, if attacked, and promising to come to their aid. The President agreed with the proposal (subject to a change in wording) and said that he intended to send a similar message. Mr. Churchill accepted the President's formula and sent his message on the night of December 6-7. The Thai forces at first resisted both a Japanese landing at Singora and a British attempt to seize a railway station at the Kra Isthmus, but, as the Foreign Office had expected, the Thai Government did not find it possible to hold out against overwhelming Japanese force. They signed an agreement with the Japanese on December 8 allowing the passage of Japanese troops. They refused a Japanese offer of territories previously lost by Thailand, since they wanted to shew that they were acting under duress and were gaining no benefit from the agreement.

moved more quickly the timetable might have to be advanced. The President did not expect an earlier move; Mr. Hull thought otherwise. In fact, the Japanese delivered their surprise attack on Pearl Harbour in the early morning of December 7.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Craigie, in a final report of February 4, 1943, gave his opinion that the Japanese decision to go to war was taken on or about November 27, and that the decision would at least have been postponed if the Japanese proposals of November 20 had been accepted as a basis of negotiation. Sir R. Craigie considered that the decision on the American side not to proceed with Mr. Hull's counter-proposals was 'unfortunate', and that the 'final reply' of the United States Government to Japan was in terms which the latter was certain to reject. The Foreign Office did not agree either at the time or in 1943 with Sir R. Craigie's view that acceptance of the Japanese proposals would have averted or postponed war.

## CHAPTER IX

Anglo-Russian relations from Mr. Eden's visit to Moscow in December, 1941, to the end of 1942: the Anglo-Russian treaty of May 26, 1942: Russian demands for the opening of a second front: Russo-Polish relations from June, 1941, to April, 1943

### (i)

*Mr. Eden's conversations in Moscow, December, 1941: Russian frontier demands: British unwillingness to recognise territorial changes effected during the war: Anglo-American discussions with regard to the Russian demands: British decision to accept the Russian claims except with regard to Poland (December 1941-March 1942.)*

ON November 29, 1941, Mr. Eden, before leaving for Moscow, decided to give Stalin a memorandum and the draft of a proposed joint declaration of policy. He would say that the purpose of his visit was to remove Russian suspicions that we intended to make an 'Anglo-American' peace without reference to Russian interests, and that we should not take sufficiently drastic measures to render Germany incapable of aggression. The memorandum would suggest that the two Governments should pledge themselves to continue the war until the total defeat of Germany. For the peace settlement we should take the Atlantic Charter as a starting point, and link it with a statement by Stalin on November 6, 1941,<sup>1</sup> that the aims of the Soviet Government were not the seizure of foreign territory or the subjugation of foreign peoples, but the liberation of their own territories and peoples. They wanted to assist other enslaved peoples in their struggle for liberation; they did not intend any interference in their internal affairs.

The memorandum would also explain that it was premature to attempt a post-war settlement on the lines of the clause in the Atlantic Charter that territorial changes should accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned. We realised the need of strengthening the smaller countries of Europe so that they could resist German pressure, and we were considering the possibilities of federation. We wished the Soviet Government to take

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 163.

part in future discussions on economic reconstruction, and we would do all we could to assist in the economic rehabilitation of the U.S.S.R.

Mr. Eden held his first conversation with Stalin and Molotov on December 16. The military situation was now different in two important respects from that of mid-November. The German offensive had been held; on the other hand, owing to the entry of Japan into the war, there was even less chance of finding the men and shipping necessary for a British force anywhere on the Russian front. On the political side, however, the entry of the United States into the war had greatly increased the importance of Anglo-American co-operation; the Russians were therefore more anxious to commit Great Britain to their plans for a post-war settlement. At the beginning of the discussions Stalin said that the Russians wanted an agreement, not a declaration.<sup>1</sup> He shewed Mr. Eden drafts of an alliance providing for military assistance and an agreement on the post-war reconstruction of Europe and the content of the peace treaties. He suggested a secret protocol to this agreement according to which the East Prussia would be transferred to Poland, and Tilsit and German territory north of the river Niemen<sup>2</sup> to the Lithuanian Republic of the U.S.S.R. The Rhineland would be detached from Prussia; Austria and possibly Bavaria would become separate States. Stalin said that, if France did not emerge from the war as a Great Power, Great Britain should occupy military bases such as Boulogne and Dunkirk, and also bases, with garrisons, if necessary, in Belgium and the Netherlands. Stalin would not object to British bases in Norway and Sweden. He said that the Russians wanted their western frontier in Finland and the Baltic area to be restored to its position in June, 1941; the Curzon line,<sup>3</sup> with slight variations, might serve as the frontier with Poland. Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina would be taken back from Roumania and Petsamo from Finland.

Mr. Eden's second conversation with Stalin took place at midnight on December 17-18. Mr. Eden had already told Stalin that he could not sign the protocol without consulting his colleagues, and that the British Government had not yet considered the details of a territorial settlement. Stalin and Molotov now argued at length that the question of the Russian frontier, and especially the incorporation of the Baltic States with the U.S.S.R., should be regarded as settled in accordance with the wishes of the Soviet Government, and that, unless this Russian demand were recognised, it would be necessary to postpone any agreement. Mr. Eden said again and again that he had no

<sup>1</sup> Stalin described a declaration as 'algebra,' and an agreement as 'practical arithmetic.'

<sup>2</sup> i.e., territory ceded under the treaty of Versailles and reannexed by Germany in March, 1939.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 201, note 1.



authority to accept any changes of frontier and that the British Government had agreed with the United States Government that such changes should not be made during the war. The argument continued on the following evening; the Russians held to their demands. On December 20 Mr. Eden promised to report the demands to the War Cabinet. He had indeed already telegraphed to London a report of the situation. The War Cabinet replied that he could not say more than he had said about discussing the Russian claims on his return home. The Prime Minister telegraphed from his ship on the way to the United States that the demands conflicted with the Atlantic Charter to which we were bound; we would consult the Dominions and the United States but all questions of territorial frontiers should be left to the Peace Conference.<sup>1</sup>

The consideration of the Russian demands was postponed until the Prime Minister's return to London. At the end of January, 1942, the Foreign Office drew up a memorandum pointing out that we should need Russian collaboration after the war as a counterweight to Germany. If we had to choose between Russia and the United States, we should choose the latter, but we ought to try to harmonise Anglo-Russian and Anglo-American policy. Our first step in dealing with the Russian demands should be to consult the President. If he would not agree to the demands—which were put forward as a claim to territory lost in the German invasion—we could propose that Great Britain and the United States should support, after the war, either the acquisition by the U.S.S.R. of bases in territories contiguous to the U.S.S.R., especially in the Baltic or Black Sea regions, or control by the Soviet Government of the foreign policy and defence of the Baltic States. The question of the absorption of the Baltic States, Bessarabia, and parts of Finland would be left to the Peace Conference.

Lord Halifax was instructed to speak in this sense to the State Department. He was told by Mr. Welles on February 20 that Mr. Roosevelt intended to approach Stalin through M. Litvinov, and also through Admiral Standley who was shortly going as Ambassador to Moscow. Meanwhile M. Maisky had asked more than once why there was so long a delay in answering Stalin's questions about the 1941 frontiers. The Foreign Office were also a little concerned over an order of the day issued by Stalin on February 23, 1942, to the Russian army. This order did not mention Anglo-American assistance to Russia, and appeared to define Russian war aims not as the overthrow of the Nazi régime but as the liberation of Russian territory. The Foreign Office did not interpret this order as evidence that

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's telegram, see Churchill, III, 615-16. Mr. Hull had sent a message to Mr. Eden before he left for Moscow warning him of the effect in the United States of the conclusion of any secret agreements with the Russians.

Stalin was considering a separate peace, but they could not exclude the possibility that, once the Germans were turned out of Russia, the Soviet Government might take no further active part in the war.

On March 7 the Prime Minister sent a message to Mr. Roosevelt that, owing to the gravity of the war situation, 'the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to deny to Russia the frontiers which she occupied when Germany attacked her.'<sup>1</sup> Mr. Roosevelt, however, felt the greatest difficulty about our proposals, and was sure that the Russians would not 'quit the war' over the question. Mr. Eden instructed Lord Halifax to explain that the reason why we wanted to satisfy Stalin was that we hoped to get him to pay some attention to British and American views, for example, on the question of Russian participation in the war against Japan.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Roosevelt, however, persisted in his plan to approach Stalin through M. Litvinov. He told M. Litvinov on March 12 that he was entirely in favour of promoting Russian security, but that he could not agree to any treaty, open or secret, about frontiers until the end of the war. The Soviet Government did not think that they were required to give an answer to Mr. Roosevelt's observations. The War Cabinet now had to choose between giving way to the Russians or to the Americans. In view of the military situation they decided to satisfy the Russians. Lord Halifax was asked on the night of March 26-7 to explain to the Americans that as a European Power for whom post-war collaboration with Russia was essential, we had to accept the Russian decision—however unreasonable—not to discuss with us major matters connected with the war until the frontier question had been settled. We had therefore to tell the Soviet Government that we would negotiate a treaty including implicit recognition of their claim to their 1940 frontiers other than that of Poland.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill telegraphed to Stalin on March 9 that he had urged President Roosevelt to approve the signature of the agreement about the frontiers of Russia at the end of the war. For the text of these two telegrams, see Churchill, IV, 293-4.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin had explained to Mr. Eden during his visit to Moscow that the Soviet Government could not undertake war against Japan. Mr. Eden had answered that for similar reasons we could not open a second front in Europe or send a British force to the Russian front.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Roosevelt maintained his view about the treaty. Mr. Welles explained to Lord Halifax that the President would have to state in public that he had been told of our intention. He would try to say no more, but he expected his silence to be taken as a sign of disapproval.

## (ii)

*M. Molotov's visits to London: Russian acceptance of British proposal for a mutual assistance pact: signature of the Anglo-Russian treaty of May 26, 1942: M. Molotov in Washington: British refusal to promise a second front in 1942: Mr. Churchill's visit to Moscow, August 12-16: Russian complaints of the failure to open a second front.*

The British Government had given way to the Russian demands for three reasons: (i) They could not be sure that the Russians, if Hitler offered them a chance of doing so, would not return to the policy of keeping out of the war—and allowing the western Powers and Germany to fight to mutual exhaustion. (ii) They wanted real collaboration with Russia after the war, and could not expect to build up relations of confidence if, at a time when they were unable to draw off any large number of German troops from the Russian front, they also refused the claim to frontiers which the Russians regarded as essential for their defence against future aggression. (iii) The Russians, if they drove back the Germans, would reoccupy the territories in question. It would then be impossible to turn them out. Hence the best course seemed to be to accept their claims, and in so doing to try to limit them, especially with regard to Poland. Nevertheless the acceptance of the claims was in fact a surrender of principle, and perhaps the most significant consequence was the implied admission that the Russian use of democratic phrases could be allowed to cover acts incompatible with the terms of the Atlantic Charter and the freedom of small States. The British Government had rightly refused hitherto to recognise the methods by which the Russians had obtained the consent of the Baltic States to the surrender of their independence. Once this 'make-believe' had been accepted, it was difficult to reject further Russian action on similar lines. Although the British Government, in the spring of 1942, could not foresee the political consequences of their surrender of principle, their own negotiations with the Russians in 1939 might have shown them that the Soviet Government would make no concessions in return, but would merely exploit the surrender.

The Russians indeed attempted this kind of exploitation at once. On April 8 Mr. Eden suggested to M. Maisky that negotiations for the treaty should take place in London. He invited M. Molotov to come for the signature. M. Molotov replied at first that he could not leave Moscow, but a little over a fortnight later this decision was

changed.<sup>1</sup> Stalin suggested that Molotov should go to London to discuss the differences of view which still remained over the text of the proposed agreements. These differences of view were important. The Foreign Office considered that the treaty should define Anglo-Russian collaboration as within the framework of the United Nations;<sup>2</sup> there should be some mention of proposals for confederations as evidence of the British intention to provide for the security of the smaller European States; there should also be a joint statement safeguarding the question of the Polish frontier, and a general acceptance of the principles of 'no territorial aggrandisement' and 'non-interference.' The Russian counter-proposals received from M. Maisky on May 1 excluded any reference to the United Nations or to the question of European confederations. The draft implied that the British Government would not be concerned with the Soviet-Polish frontier negotiations. M. Maisky made it clear that the Soviet Government would not allow any form of local autonomy in the Baltic States. He also asked for a secret protocol in which the British Government would agree to Russo-Finnish and Russo-Roumanian pacts of mutual assistance. Mr. Eden pointed out that this latter demand had not been made during his visit to Moscow, and that 'it was despairing to negotiate with the Soviet Government when they invariably raised their price at every meeting.'

In view of these difficulties the Foreign Office favoured a new offer to the Soviet Government in the form of a post-war alliance directed against the revival of German aggression; the treaty would not mention frontiers, but would safeguard British collaboration with the United Nations. M. Molotov arrived in London on May 20, and met the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden on the following day. The Prime Minister explained once again why we could not accept the Russian proposals; he said, however, that after the war we wished the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, and the United States to work together in guiding the world. If we could maintain friendship and trustful co-operation, other matters would easily fall into their place.

Mr. Eden held a number of discussions with M. Molotov without reaching agreement. At their fourth meeting, on May 22, Mr. Eden introduced formally the alternative proposal.<sup>3</sup> He gave M.

<sup>1</sup> After a visit of General Marshall and Mr. Hopkins to London for discussions in connexion with American plans for a large-scale landing in northern France in 1943 and a possible landing in the autumn of 1942, Mr. Roosevelt, with the Prime Minister's agreement, invited Stalin to send two Russian representatives to Washington. Mr. Roosevelt apparently mentioned M. Molotov by name in his invitation. Stalin then decided that M. Molotov should stop in London for a discussion of the treaty.

<sup>2</sup> There was as yet no United Nations Organisation. On the other hand, if there were no reference to the declaration of the United Nations (see below, pp. 431-3), it might have been assumed that the British Government were not only departing from the principles of the Atlantic Charter, but in making an exclusive treaty with the U.S.S.R. were leaving what might be called the 'circle' of the United Nations.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Eden had mentioned the plan to M. Molotov at an informal discussion on the previous evening.

Molotov the draft of a treaty providing a pact of mutual assistance for twenty years. Mr. Eden said that this treaty would shew that the two governments intended to work together for at least a generation. The treaty did not deal with frontiers, but, obviously, if we were offering a twenty years pact, we must wish Russia, as our ally, to be strong and secure.

M. Molotov was at first unwilling to submit this proposal to Moscow for immediate consideration. On May 25 he said that he was ready to discuss the new draft<sup>1</sup> and that he might receive instructions about it during the night or on the morning of May 26. The treaty was in fact signed on May 26. The first part of it repeated earlier undertakings of mutual assistance and an agreement not to conclude a separate peace; the second part, which was to remain in force for twenty years, laid down the bases of post-war collaboration both in resisting future aggression and in post-war reconstruction.<sup>2</sup>

The Foreign Office—and the State Department<sup>3</sup>—considered the Anglo-Russian treaty as a step of great importance in getting the confidence of the Russians. Throughout the negotiations the British Ministers had done their best to convince the Soviet leaders that the British desire for post-war collaboration was genuine, and that it was based on a common interest which would continue after the defeat of Germany, and in spite of fundamental differences between the internal régimes of Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. For a time the Russians were equally enthusiastic, at all events in public, about the treaty. During the next five months, however, the immediate issue for the Russians was one of military survival and the demands which they made to the western Powers for a diversion on a large scale, in other words, the opening of a second front, became increasingly strident. The Foreign Office, obviously, could take only a subordinate and indirect part in the discussions and decisions on strategy over the months between M. Molotov's visit to London and the 'turn of the tide' in the autumn of 1942, but, apart from the direct exchanges between the Prime Minister and Stalin, the Foreign Office and the British Embassy at Moscow were the channels of communication with the Soviet Government, and the more so because there was no

<sup>1</sup> On May 24 M. Molotov had a talk with Mr. Winant, who told him that a treaty on the lines of the Russian proposals would be likely to make a bad impression in the United States.

<sup>2</sup> The treaty envisaged an organisation of 'like-minded States . . . for common action to preserve peace and resist aggression in the post-war period.' Article V, dealing with post-war collaboration, stated that the two parties would 'take into account the interests of the United Nations' and would 'act in accordance with the two principles of not seeking territorial aggrandisement for themselves and of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.' For the text of the treaty, see Cmd. 6368 of 1942.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Welles told Lord Halifax that he thought the change to a new text a 'miracle.'

Anglo-Russian military liaison comparable with the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff.

M. Molotov had told the Prime Minister on May 21 that he regarded the question of a second front as more important than that of a treaty, and that he proposed to discuss it with President Roosevelt. On May 22 the Prime Minister, with Mr. Attlee, Mr. Eden and the Chiefs of Staff, went over the whole matter with M. Molotov. The Prime Minister explained once more why proposals for the landing of a large force were physically impossible.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless M. Molotov came back from his visit to Washington with a communiqué—which was to be issued after it had received British approval—stating that ‘in the course of conversations full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a second front in Europe in 1942.’ The British Government had not been consulted about this communiqué, though on May 28, before M. Molotov had begun discussions in Washington, the Prime Minister had warned Mr. Roosevelt of the ‘difficulties of 1942.’ Mr. Eden now told M. Molotov that we did not object to the wording of the communiqué, since it might be useful as a means of worrying and deceiving the Germans. M. Molotov agreed, but added that there should be ‘no deception between friends.’ There was, in fact, no deception. The Prime Minister gave M. Molotov an *aide-mémoire* on June 10 summarising the action which we were already taking and would continue to take in order to relieve the pressure on the Russians, but stating that we could give no promise in the matter of a second front.<sup>2</sup>

After M. Molotov’s return to Moscow it soon became clear that the Russians were intending to treat the communiqué as a definite promise. Sir A. Clark Kerr<sup>3</sup> reported on June 28 that M. Molotov had ‘swept aside’ his suggestion that perhaps no ‘fast promise had been given.’ M. Molotov said that the test of the Anglo-Russian treaty would be the opening of a second front. At Mr. Eden’s suggestion the War Cabinet agreed that Sir A. Clark Kerr should be instructed to tell M. Molotov that the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden were troubled that he might be overrating the probability of an early establishment of a second front in Europe, and that the Prime Minister had pointed out to him the difficulties, especially in regard to landing-craft. Sir A. Clark Kerr carried out these instructions on the evening of July 4. In a long argument M. Molotov said that he and his colleagues in the Soviet Government understood the position, but that the Russian people not unnaturally fixed their attention upon the reference to a second front in the communiqué.

<sup>1</sup> For a record of this discussion, see Churchill, IV, 297–300.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this passage in the *aide-mémoire*, see Churchill, IV, 305.

<sup>3</sup> Sir S. Cripps had left Russia on January 9, 1942. Sir A. Clark Kerr, who was appointed as Ambassador in succession to Sir S. Cripps, took up his duties on March 14, 1942.



On July 14 M. Maisky came to ask Mr. Eden about the latest convoy to Russia. Mr. Eden told him that the news was bad, and that the First Sea Lord considered that, if he were on the German side, he could ensure that no ship of the next convoy reached port. The Admiralty considered it necessary to postpone this convoy until the autumn. The Prime Minister sent a long message to Stalin on July 17 explaining the reasons for this postponement.<sup>1</sup> Stalin replied on July 23 in unfriendly terms. Mr. Eden told M. Maisky that the charges made in the reply would not influence our attitude towards our Ally, but would have 'unhelpful effects' on the Prime Minister and the British Government. Mr. Eden said that perhaps it would be best to send no answer.

The Prime Minister did not answer Stalin's unfounded accusation of breach of faith. On July 28 Sir A. Clark Kerr suggested to Sir A. Cadogan that Mr. Churchill should come to Moscow in order to explain to the Russians why we could not open a second front. Although M. Molotov said that he had passed on to Stalin what he had been told in London, he did not appear to have explained 'the Prime Minister's mind.' Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that a visit by Mr. Churchill might turn the scale as regards Russian morale.

The Prime Minister accepted this suggestion. He could do so more easily because the military situation in the western desert was now better, and the Americans had agreed to the plan for an expedition to North Africa. On the other hand the Germans were at the highest point of their success in Russia, and the Prime Minister could offer no hope of direct relief in the critical months before the winter. The Prime Minister has given a full account of his meetings with Stalin.<sup>2</sup> These meetings took place between August 12 and the night of August 15-16. Mr. Churchill obviously impressed Stalin, and his explanation—repeated once again—of the reasons why we could not invade Northern France in 1942 with any hope of relieving the pressure on the Russians had some effect, especially after Mr. Churchill had told Stalin of the North African plans.

Nevertheless Russian propaganda in favour of a second front continued, and M. Maisky went on arguing to Mr. Eden that the Russian army and people had been led to expect this second front in 1942. M. Maisky himself, to the knowledge of the Foreign Office, was trying to persuade newspaper editors in London to exert pressure on the Government. The Foreign Office, as earlier, thought it best to take no notice of these activities, unless M. Maisky went wholly beyond the limit permissible to an Ambassador. On September 18

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's message and Stalin's reply, see Churchill, IV, 239-42.

<sup>2</sup> See Churchill, IV, 429-51. At the Prime Minister's suggestion, the President sent Mr. Harriman, Major-General Maxwell, and Major-General Bradley as representatives of the United States. Sir A. Cadogan, General Brooke, General Wavell, and Air Chief Marshal Tedder went with the Prime Minister.



Mr. Eden had to send for him in order to complain of a talk which he had given to a number of American journalists and in which he had said that a second front in 1942 was not only necessary, but 'entirely feasible.' M. Maisky gave rather a lame explanation of his words, and said that he was not acting under instructions from Moscow. A week later the Foreign Office asked Sir A. Clark Kerr to point out to the Soviet Government that the propaganda (which he had reported from Moscow) criticising us for breaking a pledge was doing harm to Anglo-Soviet relations and encouraging the Germans. M. Molotov listened to Sir A. Clark Kerr's representations without shewing any irritation, and tried to explain away the Russian press criticisms.<sup>1</sup>

With the approach of winter, and the failure of the Germans to take Stalingrad, the demand for a second front became less strident, but the suspicions and resentment of the Russian leaders only took a different form. The most surprising expression of resentment occurred over the question of the punishment of war criminals. The Allied Governments in exile had raised this question at a meeting in January, 1942, and in July had made an official approach to the major Allies. On August 6 the British Government communicated to the Soviet and other Allied Governments their preliminary ideas on the subject. Later, on October 3, they informed these Governments of a statement which Lord Simon (as Lord Chancellor) intended to make in the House of Lords four days later. The Soviet Government did not answer the note of October 3; the other Governments (except the Chinese, whose reply was delayed) agreed with the proposed statement. On October 14, without any reference to the British communications, the Soviet Government issued a declaration advocating the immediate trial of every war criminal already in Allied hands. Five days later *Pravda* published an article on Hess<sup>2</sup> suggesting that Great Britain was a place of refuge for gangsters and describing the British view that Hess was not liable for trial until after the war as an attempt to ignore his crimes. Sir A. Clark Kerr considered that this article, and the declaration of October 14, were intended to stir up public opinion in Great Britain against the British Government. The Foreign Office thought it necessary to make some reply. Mr. Eden therefore stated in the House of Commons on October 21 that proposals for the establishment of a United Nations Commission for the investigation of war crimes had been submitted to all the Allied Governments; that all except the Soviet Government had accepted them, and that Hess was being treated as a prisoner of war.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wendell Willkie, who visited the Soviet Union at this time, told Sir A. Clark Kerr that M. Molotov was unfriendly to us, and was largely responsible for prodding Stalin into suspicion and hostility. Sir A. Clark Kerr attended a dinner given to Mr. Willkie in Moscow on September 26 at which, after M. Molotov had proposed a number of toasts without mention of Mr. Churchill, Mr. Willkie himself proposed a toast to Mr. Churchill.

<sup>2</sup> Hitler's 'deputy', who had flown to Great Britain in May, 1941.

Mr. Eden complained strongly to M. Maisky about the *Pravda* article, and also instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr to find out what the Russian grievances really were. Sir A. Clark Kerr had a long conversation with Stalin and M. Molotov on November 5. M. Molotov's part in the conversation was only to try to discredit the British case. After much bickering over the date on which the British note of October 3 was delivered,<sup>1</sup> Sir A. Clark Kerr mentioned the *Pravda* article. Stalin did not appear to know much about the article. Sir A. Clark Kerr noticed that when he began to study it, he 'dropped it like a hot potato.' At the end of the talk Stalin said that he wanted the British and Soviet Governments to agree, and that Hess 'was not worth all this trouble.'<sup>2</sup>

## (iii)

*Russo-Polish relations from the German attack on the U.S.S.R. to the crisis over the Katyn massacres: Russian severance of diplomatic relations with the Polish Government: British attempts to bring about a Russo-Polish détente (June, 1941–April, 1943).*

The history of Russo-Polish relations between the Russo-German partition of the Polish State and the German attack on the U.S.S.R. (which drove the Russian armies to the east of the Polish frontier) was a grim record of deportations and other savage measures of administrative repression. After the German attack the Soviet Government did not change their fundamental attitude of hostility towards the Poles, though for obvious reasons they were now willing to come to a formal Russo-Polish agreement. A Polish Government<sup>3</sup> had been set up first in France and then in Great Britain, and Polish forces were fighting in 1941 with the British forces. The British Government had helped in the conclusion of the Russo-Polish treaty on July 30, 1941, annulling the Russo-German agreement with regard to Poland, and exchanging promises of mutual aid and support in the war against Germany. The Soviet Government consented, in a second agreement of August 14, 1941, to the formation of a Polish army, under a Polish commander, on Russian territory. They also granted, again as the result of British pressure, an amnesty to all Polish citizens detained in Russian territory. At the same time the British Government

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office held a receipt to the effect that the note was delivered at the Soviet Embassy at 2.53 p.m. on October 3.

<sup>2</sup> Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that Stalin really had been afraid that the British Government might send Hess back to Germany. The Prime Minister's view of the affair was that 'it would be a great mistake to run after the Russians in their present mood; and still more to run around with them chasing a chimera.' See Churchill, IV, 521.

<sup>3</sup> This Government, headed by General Sikorski, was representative of the four main Polish parties which had opposed the Pilsudski-Beck régime; the Government dissociated itself from this régime. For the connexion between the Government in exile and the Polish Underground Movement, see below, p. 251, note 2.

gave the Polish Government an assurance that, in conformity with the Anglo-Polish treaty of 1939, they had not entered into any undertaking with the Russians affecting Russo-Polish relations, and did not recognise any territorial changes effected in Poland since August, 1939.

The omission from the Russo-Polish treaty of any positive statement about frontiers was significant. The Russians tacitly maintained their decrees of November, 1939, by which large areas of territory legally part of the Polish State had been annexed to the U.S.S.R. The Poles, with the exception of a small communist minority, maintained their right to all territory which they had occupied at the outbreak of war with Germany. A military and political agreement between two governments with such conflicting territorial claims was an anomaly made possible only because the disputed areas were in enemy occupation. The Polish position, however, was weaker than the Russian from every point of view. Without the defeat of Germany there was no chance of an independent Poland; after the German defeat the Russians were unlikely to make territorial concessions to the Poles. The Russians might be exhausted by the war; the exhaustion of the Poles would be far greater, and Russian armies would probably be in physical occupation at least of eastern Poland. Moreover the moral claim of the Poles to the major part of the territory demanded from them by the Russians was not strong; the British view at the time of the treaty of Versailles had been that the Polish territorial demands were unwise; the frontier, known as the Curzon line,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Allied Supreme Council in 1919 had attempted to find a reasonably close approximation to an ethnographical eastern frontier for the reconstituted Polish State. They drew a line which at its northern end divided the former Suwalki province between Lithuania and Poland—a relatively easy task owing to the existence of a clear-cut ethnographical division. Thence the line ran with a moderate bulge westwards from Grodno to the Bug at Brest-Litovsk, leaving both towns to Russia, but giving Bialystock to Poland. It then followed the Bug to the Galician border near Sokal. From this point to the Carpathians two lines (varying according to the status of Eastern Galicia) had been suggested. Line A ran just east of Przemyśl; line B included in Poland Lwow and the oil-bearing area of Drohobycz. The British Government had recommended line A. The line, with variant A in Eastern Galicia, was the line to which Lord Curzon proposed that the Polish troops should retire in July, 1920, when they were being driven westwards by Soviet forces. The line was not accepted by the Soviet Government, and fighting between Poles and Russians continued, unfavourably to the Russians, until the treaty of Riga in July, 1921. The settlement then reached—though it did not go as far as the eastern frontier of Poland in 1772 before the first partition—was much further east than the Curzon line. The additional area of pre-1914 Russian territory included in the Polish State was about 46,000 sq. miles, with a population of 4,000,000 of whom 1,250,000 (according to the Polish census of 1921) were Polish-speaking; in the former Austro-Hungarian territory of Eastern Galicia the State of Poland acquired an additional 18,000 sq. miles, with a population of 4,000,000 of whom (according to the same census) 1,500,000 were Polish-speaking. The Russo-German line of partition in 1939 ran farther to the west than the Curzon line, and included in the U.S.S.R. purely Polish territory in the north, and a mixed area in the south. It is impossible to say whether an offer to accept the Curzon line by the Polish Government as early as July, 1941, or soon afterwards, would have satisfied the Russians and saved Polish independence. The Poles did not take this view, and in any case a Polish Government in exile could hardly have made so large a surrender of territory, especially in view of the declared policy of the British and United States Governments that all territorial questions should be reserved for settlement at the Peace Conference.

suggested by the British Government in 1920 had assigned to the U.S.S.R. most of the territory annexed by the Russians in 1939.

Even on what might be called a day-to-day basis Russo-Polish relations were not satisfactory. The Russians began by releasing a large number of Polish men and women from prison, labour camps, or exile, but the evidence of the Poles who were released shewed that very many others were still unaccounted for. The Soviet Government, in their replies to enquiries, said that they had ordered the release of all Poles, and that all Poles must therefore have been released.<sup>1</sup> There were also difficulties about the size and equipment of the Polish army. Matters improved somewhat after a visit to Moscow, in December, 1941, by General Sikorski, and the signature of a Russo-Polish declaration, but the administrative obstructions soon reappeared, particularly with regard to the army, and the Polish Embassy failed to get any information about the greater number of 8,000 Polish officers and 6,000 other ranks known to have been prisoners of war in the early months of 1940. Meanwhile by a piece of chicanery the Soviet Government on December 1, 1941, claimed as Russian citizens all persons who on November 1-2, 1939, were on Polish territory annexed to the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup> They maintained that their willingness to exempt from this claim persons of Polish race was an act of grace. They rescinded this 'act of grace' in a note of January 16, 1943, and had previously drawn up a list of complaints against the whole course of Polish policy since the treaty of July, 1941. Mr. Eden asked Sir A. Clark Kerr to protest against the Russian action. The Soviet Government then withdrew from a strict interpretation of their note of January 16 and agreed that the whole question should be made the subject of negotiation. The Russian concession was of little value because the Soviet Government used administrative measures to break up the Polish relief organisations. Count Raczyński, Polish Ambassador in London, asked for British intervention in the matter. The Prime Minister inclined to think that, in view of the Russian attitude on the question of convoys,<sup>3</sup> the time was unfavourable, but the Foreign Office pointed out that the Poles had very serious grievances, and would have to publish their case if

<sup>1</sup> Among those who were released many were sent off without food or money, and, as winter drew on, died of cold or hunger. Others were left where they were without any means of subsistence. The Polish Government protested that many Russian officials were believed to have told the Poles concerned that their misfortunes were due to obstruction or lack of interest on the part of their own Government and the Polish Embassy in Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> The Poles argued that this claim was contrary to international usage and that, in particular, it violated the fourth Hague Convention of 1907. The Soviet action was especially harsh since nearly all the Polish citizens in the U.S.S.R. had been deported from the areas concerned; they were therefore deprived—as Soviet citizens—of any relief which they had been receiving through Polish organisations. Many of them were families of Polish soldiers serving in the Middle East.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 240.

nothing were done about it.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister therefore agreed to send a message in general terms to Stalin, and to suggest that we would take over the care of Polish orphans and young children, and of certain categories of adults. Before the terms of the Prime Minister's message were settled a new crisis had arisen between the Polish and Soviet Governments.

With the advance of the Soviet armies, the question of the Russo-Polish frontier was already coming into the foreground. On February 25, 1943, the Polish Government issued a statement maintaining their claim to the frontiers of September 1, 1939. The Soviet Government replied in a press statement accusing the Poles of refusing to recognise the historical rights of the Ukrainians and White Russians to national unity. Mr. Eden, before leaving for Washington in March, 1943,<sup>2</sup> was told by M. Maisky that the Soviet Government wanted the Curzon line, with minor adjustments, as their frontier with Poland, and that Russian relations with Poland would depend on the character of the Polish Government. Mr. Eden found that President Roosevelt was now willing to accept the Curzon line and also the Russian claims to the Baltic States. The Foreign Office therefore had to consider whether, in spite of our previous unwillingness to commit ourselves to any territorial changes during the war, it might not be wise to try to get a general settlement of the Russian frontier. Apart, however, from doubts whether Mr. Roosevelt would commit himself publicly to the Russian claims, the difficulties of accepting them at the present stage were insuperable.

In any case the serious developments in mid-April ruled out the possibility of a friendly discussion of the frontier question. General Sikorski, on April 15, gave the Prime Minister a note about Polish officers and men missing in Russia, and mentioned to him German statements about the discovery of the bodies of large numbers of Polish officers and others in a common grave at Katyn, near Smolensk. The Prime Minister said that the German statement was obviously a move to create discord between the Allies, but his comment after the conversation was that 'the facts are pretty grim.' On April 17 the

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office had occasion at this time, and later, to complain to the Poles about the provocative attacks on the U.S.S.R. in the Polish press in London. This provocation was not limited to the press. Mr. Eden spoke to Count Raczynski on January 22, 1943, about the Polish intention to give the name *Lwow* to the cruiser *Dragon* which the British Government were transferring to the Polish navy. Since Lwow was in the most disputed frontier area, Mr. Eden suggested that the Poles might choose some other name. General Sikorski, to whom Mr. Eden also spoke, at first refused, but later agreed to name the cruiser *Gdansk*. The press attacks did not come only from the Polish side. Mr. Eden complained to M. Maisky of thinly veiled attacks on the Polish Government in the *Soviet War News*, issued by the Soviet Embassy in London.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 437-9.

Polish Ministry of National Defence (apparently without consulting General Sikorski) issued a communiqué on the subject of the missing officers. The communiqué referred to the usual lies of German propaganda, but claimed that an investigation into the German allegations was necessary, and stated that the Polish Government had asked the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva whether they would make the investigation. On April 20 the Polish Government again asked the Soviet Government for information about the whereabouts of the missing officers and other prisoners. The Soviet Government replied with an angry note breaking off diplomatic relations with Poland, and accusing the Poles of connivance with the enemy in launching a campaign against the Soviet Government in order to exercise pressure for the purpose of obtaining territorial concessions. The Polish Government denied these charges, and on April 30 announced that they regarded the application to the Red Cross Committee as having lapsed, since the Committee had said that they could act only if all the parties invited them to do so.

During the exchange of notes the British Government had done their best to try to bring about a *détente*.<sup>1</sup> M. Maisky brought a note from Stalin to the Prime Minister on April 21 bitterly attacking the Poles, and announcing the 'interruption' of Polish-Soviet relations. Mr. Churchill replied on April 24 that we should oppose any investigation in territory under German control, and that he hoped that the 'interruption' of diplomatic relations was not final, and would not be given public announcement. On the following day Mr. Churchill telegraphed to Stalin that the Poles had not synchronised (as Stalin had alleged) their appeal to the Red Cross with a statement put out by the Germans, and that they had now agreed with our advice not to press for a Red Cross investigation. Stalin, however, told Mr. Churchill that the decision to break off diplomatic relations with Poland had already been taken and must be published.

On April 30 the Prime Minister sent another message to Stalin asking him to consider 'in a spirit of magnanimity' the Polish request that the dependants of their forces in Iran and the U.S.S.R. should be allowed to leave the U.S.S.R. He also mentioned that the Germans were suggesting that the U.S.S.R. would now set up a Polish Government on Russian territory, and deal only with it.

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office was at first inclined to think that the German statements were propagandist lies. There was good reason, in view of the fearful atrocities committed by the Germans in Poland, to assume that the mass executions had been done by them. At the time of their statements, the Germans were exterminating the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto; two months earlier they had killed some thousands of these Jews whom they had lured out of the ghetto. After a further examination, in the course of the year 1943, of the evidence then available the Foreign Office were unable to exclude the hypothesis that the responsibility for the Katyn massacres lay with the Soviet authorities. The report of a special Russian commission of enquiry in January, 1944 (after the Russian re-occupation of the Katyn area) did not seem to the Foreign Office to provide evidence conclusive of German responsibility.



The Prime Minister warned Stalin that we should be unable to recognise such a government.<sup>1</sup> M. Maisky brought Stalin's reply to the Foreign Office on May 6. Stalin denied that the Soviet Government were intending to establish a new Polish Government in Russia, but suggested that the three Powers might 'improve the composition' of the existing Government. He repeated to Sir A. Clark Kerr on May 7 that a reconstruction of the Polish Government was necessary.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill also sent for M. Maisky on April 30 to protest against an article in the *Soviet War News* alleging that the Polish Government did not represent the Polish people. Mr. Churchill told M. Maisky that the so-called *émigré* character of General Sikorski's Government was 'not unconnected with a double occupation of Poland.' He took up M. Maisky very sharply when the latter spoke of Poland as a country of 20 million people next door to a country of 200 million. Mr. Eden also found it necessary to tell M. Maisky on May 6, in answer to his comment that we were 'too tolerant of Polish feelings,' that we had gone to war on account of Poland.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin said that the Poles were trying to play off one Ally against the other. They thought themselves clever tacticians, but 'God has given them no brains.'

## CHAPTER X

The Allied landings in North Africa: the Eisenhower-Darlan agreement: British attempts to bring about a settlement between General de Gaulle and General Giraud: establishment and recognition of a French Committee of National Liberation

### (i)

*The North African landings: General Eisenhower's agreement with Admiral Darlan: Foreign Office proposal that General Eisenhower should be given American and British political advisers: appointment of Mr. Macmillan as Minister Resident at Allied Headquarters in Northwest Africa.*

THE military decision to send an expedition to North Africa in 1942 raised for the Foreign Office a number of complicated questions upon which it was desirable to get Anglo-American agreement before the landings took place. The Foreign Office assumed that many—perhaps a majority—of the French officials would remain at their posts, and that we should have to keep them, but that it would be necessary to make a general declaration of policy. This declaration would deal with the question of annulling Vichy legislation and administrative measures such as the anti-Jewish laws, and with the protection of all persons who had suffered damage owing to their loyalty to the Allied cause. Lord Halifax, who was at this time in London, was given a memorandum on August 20 for submission to the State Department. The memorandum discussed, among other matters, the policy to be adopted towards the Vichy Government. The Foreign Office view was that, after the landings had begun, an approach should be made to Marshal Pétain and Admiral Darlan. We should offer them assurances about the future of the territories concerned and ask that the French forces in North Africa should be told not to resist us. We could hardly expect Marshal Pétain to give a satisfactory answer or to leave France and establish a new government in North Africa, but he might allow others to leave for this purpose. We should also try to establish contact with Generals Weygand and Giraud.

The arguments against bringing the Fighting French into the operation were that General de Gaulle seemed to have no large following in North Africa, and that the association of his forces with

us might stiffen French resistance. On the other hand, if we excluded him entirely from North Africa, his prestige would suffer in Metropolitan France, and there would be a difficult situation in the colonies which had joined the Fighting French. The best plan would be to explain to him a few hours in advance why we had been unable to invite Fighting French forces to take part in the operation. We might ask General de Gaulle to appoint a military mission to represent him with the Allied Commander-in-Chief, but we should have to say that we could not decide upon the administration of North Africa until we knew the attitude of the French army and civil authorities, and of the population generally. If, as we hoped, French forces of resistance appeared in North Africa, they and the French National Committee would have to settle among themselves their mutual relations.

Lord Halifax was unable to discuss this memorandum with the President until September 10. He then found the President disinclined to make any definite political arrangement or to allow the State Department to deal with the political questions. Lord Halifax thought that we should do better to negotiate directly with General Eisenhower. The War Cabinet accepted the President's wish that in its early stages the operation should be given an American appearance, but they considered that reference should be made to British support and collaboration. In fact, the first texts received from Washington of a proposed public statement by the President, and of messages from him to Marshal Pétain and the French and Moroccan authorities, contained only one reference to the Allies. Lord Halifax was instructed to explain why the British Government thought a direct mention of British participation to be necessary. The President agreed to insert it, though not in the form suggested by the Foreign Office.

On October 27 the President sent to the Prime Minister the draft of a statement to be issued to the American press immediately after the landings. This statement described the expedition as an 'effective Second Front assistance to our heroic Allies in Russia.' The Foreign Office had doubts about this reference, but regarded it as an American affair. The Prime Minister was strongly in favour of allowing the text to stand. He pointed out to Mr. Eden that the American communiqué accepted during M. Molotov's visit had got us into trouble over a second front, and that it was all to the good that the Americans should get us out of the trouble. The Foreign Office also thought, on receiving the text of the message which President Roosevelt proposed to send to Marshal Pétain, that the wording—in which Mr. Roosevelt addressed the Marshal as his 'dear old friend'—would do great harm in Metropolitan France and with the Fighting French. Mr. Churchill agreed with Mr. Eden's view, and wrote to Mr. Roosevelt asking him to tone down the text.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the Prime Minister's message, and the President's reply, see Churchill, IV, 545-6.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Office had left to the Americans the negotiations with General Giraud.<sup>1</sup> Since it was impossible to tell General Giraud all the facts, these negotiations—almost inevitably—resulted in misunderstanding to such an extent that when, somewhat against his judgment, the General was brought to Gibraltar on November 7, less than twelve hours before the landings were due to begin, he caused great embarrassment by his insistence on claiming the supreme command. He did not fly to Algeria until November 9—when his American sponsors had already found the political situation very different from anything they had expected. Contrary to the forecasts of American observers, the majority of Frenchmen in civil or military authority in North Africa regarded Marshal Pétain not as a ‘quisling,’ but as the representative of the ‘*pouvoir légitime*.’ The population at large, except for a small Gaullist minority, was unwilling to run any risks for a political cause or to put pressure on the army or the civil administration. General Giraud therefore would have had very little support even if he had been personally less unfitted for leadership, and if Admiral Darlan had not chanced to be in Algiers on a visit to a son who was ill with infantile paralysis. Admiral Darlan’s presence made it almost impossible for General Juin, who was in command of the troops in North Africa, and in close relations with Mr. Murphy, to take independent action, since the French authorities were most unlikely to accept his orders against the overriding authority of Admiral Darlan.

The story of General Clark’s<sup>2</sup> interviews on November 9 and 10 with Admiral Darlan, the exchange of messages between Admiral Darlan and Marshal Pétain, and the acceptance by General Eisenhower at Algiers, on November 13, of the agreement made with Admiral Darlan by General Clark, belong to the military history of the North African campaign. The negotiations with Admiral Darlan took place without reference to the British Government. The British authorities in London—including the Foreign Office—had very

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<sup>1</sup> General Giraud, who had escaped in April, 1942, from a German prisoner of war camp, had not been associated with the defeatist acts of Marshal Pétain and his Government, and had no contact with the Gaullist movement. He had been approached by General Mast, commander of a corps at Algiers, and a group of officers in North Africa who were planning a military revolt to coincide with the expected invasion of northern France by the Allies. This group also approached Mr. Murphy, American Consul at Algiers, with a request for American help. (As the senior American diplomatic representative in North Africa Mr. Murphy had been in charge of the American ‘observers’—see above, p. 104. In September, 1942, he was appointed President Roosevelt’s special observer in North Africa.) The plan envisaged by Generals Giraud and Mast was a rising in Southern France, as well as in North Africa, to be assisted by American forces under General Giraud’s command. General Giraud at first refused to agree to the Allied plan (as far as he knew it). He was finally persuaded to take his part in it, but came to Gibraltar in the belief that he would be given supreme command as soon as the landings were secure.

<sup>2</sup> General Mark Clark was General Eisenhower’s Deputy Commander.

little information of what was happening.<sup>1</sup> Even if they had known more, they could not easily have interfered with the actions of the Commander-in-Chief during the first dangerous days after the landings.

On November 12 General Eisenhower reported that General Giraud and Admiral Darlan had reached a tentative agreement whereby the former would be the military and the latter the political head of the French 'mission' in North Africa. After consultation with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office instructed Mr. Mack<sup>2</sup> on the night of November 12-13 to ask whether there was any question of accepting Admiral Darlan as head or member of any French administration set up in North Africa. The Prime Minister considered that, if Admiral Darlan could bring over the French fleet from Toulon or give decisive help in securing Tunis, he would have established a claim to a 'seat on the band-wagon.' Otherwise his inclusion would cause more trouble than it would be worth.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Mack was also asked to say that we could not accept General Giraud as Commander-in-Chief of all French forces. We had agreed to his appointment in North Africa, but could not give him authority over the colonies which owed allegiance to General de Gaulle and had been with us 'through all the dark days.'<sup>4</sup> On the following day Lord Halifax was instructed to tell the President or Mr. Hull that the inclusion of Admiral Darlan in a French administration would be most unpopular in Great Britain unless he had brought over the fleet, and that all hope of unifying the French Empire against the Axis would

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<sup>1</sup> As late as November 28 the Foreign Office complained of the inadequacy of the reports which they were receiving from Allied headquarters (see also p. 212, note 2). The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President on November 11 that the British Government were 'under quite definite and solemn obligations to de Gaulle and his Movement,' and must 'see they have a fair deal.' Mr. Churchill wanted above all to 'avoid the creation of rival French *émigré* governments, each favoured by one of us.' Mr. Churchill did not mention the name of Admiral Darlan, and does not seem to have had in mind the possibility that the Admiral might be maintained in authority. The context of the telegram (for the text, see Churchill, IV, 566) was General de Gaulle's request that he should be allowed to send a mission to North Africa to confer with General Giraud on the best way of assuring the unity of French resistance. The President's reply of November 12 (see Churchill, *ib.*) referred to General de Gaulle and General Giraud in somewhat disparaging terms and mentioned Admiral Darlan as a third *prima donna* and a rival claimant to the command of the French forces. The President's telegram showed that he still had no idea of the repugnance with which public opinion in Great Britain would view a bargain with Admiral Darlan.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. W. H. B. Mack, of the Foreign Office, had been appointed Political Liaison Officer with General Eisenhower in August, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office draft of this telegram had stated that we were opposed to Admiral Darlan's inclusion in the administration even if he had brought over the fleet and had facilitated a rapid advance into Tunisia. In fact, the admiral commanding the fleet at Toulon refused Darlan's appeals, and considered putting to sea to attack the Allied convoys. He was, as he might have expected, tricked by the Germans, and finally ordered the fleet to be scuttled.

<sup>4</sup> As late as May, 1942, Admiral Darlan had sent a message to the Vichy forces in Madagascar violently attacking Great Britain, and ordering the French forces to 'make the British pay dearly for their act of highway robbery.'

be lost, since neither General de Gaulle nor anyone else in his Movement would collaborate with the Admiral.

In the evening of November 13 Mr. Mack reported that he was sure that General Eisenhower accepted the British view that Admiral Darlan should not be included in the administration unless he had brought over the fleet. On the following afternoon a message from General Eisenhower to the Combined Chiefs of Staff was received in London. He explained that, contrary to Allied expectations, the main facts in the situation were the supreme importance of Marshal Pétain<sup>1</sup> and the view of the French authorities that Admiral Darlan alone had a right to 'assume the Marshal's mantle.' If the Allies repudiated the agreement with the Admiral, they would lose all hope of organised French cooperation in North Africa and of securing the French fleet. General Eisenhower recognised that the British and United States Governments had commitments to 'certain elements' of the French people throughout the world. He was not attempting to extend the argument with Admiral Darlan beyond the areas in which it was necessary for it to operate.<sup>2</sup> Admiral Cunningham telegraphed to the Admiralty on November 14 that, unless we accepted Admiral Darlan, we should have to undertake a military occupation of the whole of North Africa, with the probability of a renewal of hostilities with the French.

In these circumstances, after consulting Mr. Eden (and Field-Marshal Smuts), the Prime Minister telegraphed on November 15 to the President that we felt bound to accept the arrangement, though we did not regard it as 'permanent or healthy'—and that we expected to be consulted on the 'long-term steps.'<sup>3</sup> On November 17 the President issued a statement that he had agreed to the political arrangement in North Africa as a temporary expedient applying only to the immediate local situation. The President had asked for the liberation of all persons in North Africa imprisoned owing to their opposition to the Axis, and for the removal of legislation inspired by Nazi Governments or ideology.

The British Government had no option but to accept this statement and to try to secure that the policy laid down in it was carried out. The Prime Minister sent a telegram to the President on the night of November 17–18 pointing out the deep disapproval felt in Great Britain at the arrangement, and emphasising that it must be only a

<sup>1</sup> General Béthouart, a strong friend of the Allies, summed up the position in the words: 'Le mystique de Pétain est épouvantable.'

<sup>2</sup> General Eisenhower also telegraphed on November 14 the draft of a press release on the agreement with Admiral Darlan. The draft contained a sentence that he (General Eisenhower) had been assured that all important elements in North Africa could co-operate in a Provisional Government headed by Darlan. The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President his hope that 'neither this draft nor anything like it' would be published. A new text was, in fact, drawn up, and issued on November 16.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's message, see Churchill, IV, 567.



temporary expedient.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden gave Lord Halifax a statement on similar lines. The memorandum referred to the effect which any permanent arrangement would have on public opinion in France and other occupied countries as well as in Great Britain, and on relations with the Soviet Government,<sup>2</sup> and summed up the moral aspect of the matter in one unanswerable sentence: 'We are fighting for international decency, and Darlan is the antithesis of this.'

The political situation in North Africa remained most unsatisfactory. The Foreign Office thought that a draft protocol in which General Eisenhower proposed to state the terms of the arrangement with Admiral Darlan was too favourable to the latter, but the Prime Minister considered that the document merely stated the fact that Darlan had been accepted as High Commissioner and did not commit us to him in perpetuity.<sup>3</sup> On November 26 Mr. Eden wrote a minute to the Prime Minister that the French authorities were not following the policy laid down in the President's statement of November 17. Admiral Darlan had made it clear that he interpreted the word 'temporary' in regard to his own appointment as meaning 'until the liberation of France,' and that he also considered himself as holding his authority from Marshal Pétain. Our propaganda to France was almost at a standstill because we could not speak 'with a clear voice' until the Vichy element had been eliminated from the French administration in North Africa. In Europe as a whole the 'filthy race of quislings,' as the Prime Minister had described them, now had reason to think that, if only they chanced to be in authority when the forces of the United Nations arrived, they would be treated as the governments of their respective countries. Mr. Eden proposed that we should discuss at once with the United States the means of giving effect to the President's statement about the temporary nature of the arrangement. The Prime Minister thought it better to wait for a time. On December 4 Mr. Eden repeated his proposal for a discussion. He mentioned a statement by General Eisenhower which had deeply

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's message, see Churchill, IV, 568.

<sup>2</sup> M. Maisky told Mr. Eden on November 16 that the Soviet Government were anxious about the position of Admiral Darlan. Mr. Eden explained at this conversation, and later in answer to a question from the Soviet Government, that we were not committed to anything more than a temporary arrangement. Mr. Eden thought that the Soviet Government were warning us of the danger to our relations with them if we came to any permanent arrangement with men such as Admiral Darlan who had been notoriously anti-Russian. M. Molotov spoke to Sir A. Clark Kerr on November 24 about the position of the Admiral, and said that he hoped that the Soviet Government would be consulted about the establishment of a Government in North Africa. The Soviet Government seem to have been reassured by the positive statements on the British side that the arrangement with Admiral Darlan would not be lasting.

<sup>3</sup> General Eisenhower himself cut out the word 'protocol' from the document.

offended the Fighting French,<sup>1</sup> and suggested that the United States should assist General Eisenhower on the political side by giving him a special political adviser.

The Prime Minister now accepted Mr. Eden's view. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed on December 5 to tell the President that we should insist on the dismissal of pro-Axis officials, the release of sympathisers with the Allies, and the rescinding of anti-democratic legislation, and ask that American and British political representatives of high authority should be sent to Algiers to deal with those questions which were not the proper concern of a commander in the field. Our political representatives should also try to bring about an agreement between General de Gaulle and the North African administration, but such an agreement was impossible under a régime controlled by Admiral Darlan.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Halifax had an interview with President Roosevelt on December 8. The Foreign Office did not regard the result as satisfactory. Lord Halifax thought that the President was not considering early action to get rid of Admiral Darlan, and that he had in mind some kind of Anglo-Franco-American Commission upon which the Admiral would serve with a reduced status. The President agreed with the idea of sending political representatives to Algiers, and proposed Mr. Murphy, or Mr. Matthews, of the United States Embassy in London, as the American representative.<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office thought that the President did not wish to make any change in the existing arrangement for political liaison, and that we should take the initiative by naming our representative and sending him to Algiers. Meanwhile they had received more reports about the lack of control over the French administration, the continued imprisonment of Allied sympathisers, and the freedom allowed to pro-fascist organisations. At the suggestion of the Prime Minister the Foreign Office drafted for him a personal telegram to the President calling

<sup>1</sup> In a broadcast of December 3 General Eisenhower said that 'all Frenchmen worthy of their country's great past' had 'forgotten their small differences of ideas' and were 'ready to fight hand in hand to vanquish the Axis.'

<sup>2</sup> On December 4 the Chiefs of Staff in London sent a message to General Eisenhower asking for more information, and stating that they found much difficulty in following accurately the course of operations. General Eisenhower replied with a personal telegram to the Prime Minister on December 5 giving an account of the military position, and saying that Admiral Darlan was being treated only as the head of a local *de facto* organisation. The Prime Minister, in his reply, said that he felt sure that General Eisenhower would avoid all long-term commitments with the Admiral.

<sup>3</sup> The President appointed Mr. Murphy on December 15 as his personal representative with the diplomatic rank of Minister. The Prime Minister explained to the President that we proposed to send a junior 'political' Minister to North Africa. Mr. Roosevelt suggested at first that the appointments should be postponed; he agreed to them after further British insistence. The War Cabinet appointed Mr. H. Macmillan, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, with the title of Minister Resident at Allied Headquarters in North Africa. Mr. Makins, of the Foreign Office, accompanied Mr. Macmillan as assistant. Mr. Mack continued for a short time as British Civil Liaison Officer on General Eisenhower's staff.

attention to these facts as evidence of the need of immediate political and administrative advice for General Eisenhower.<sup>1</sup>

General Eisenhower sent an answer to the list of complaints about the French administration. The Foreign Office considered the answer too optimistic; the facts showed, for example, that the reinstatement of German sympathisers and the victimisation of our friends continued. On the other hand we ought not to 'snipe at' the Americans. They could not change the whole basis of French administration within a few weeks, or transform a pro-Vichy régime without a long process of 'disinfection and re-education.' The trouble was that with Admiral Darlan at the head of affairs, the process would not operate effectively. The death of Admiral Darlan<sup>2</sup> altered the situation, but did not remove the misgivings on the British side about American policy in North Africa.

(ii)

*General de Gaulle and the North African landings: relations between General de Gaulle and General Giraud: General de Gaulle and the Casablanca Conference: divergence between British and American views on the position of General Giraud.*

Mr. Churchill had proposed to tell General de Gaulle of the North African landings immediately before they took place. At the President's request, he waited until after they had begun; General de Gaulle thus first heard of them over the wireless and in the press. Mr. Churchill explained, when he saw the General at 1 p.m. on November 8, that he had felt bound to conform to the President's wish since we had agreed to American command in policy as well as in strategy. Mr. Churchill explained the arrangements made with General Giraud, and hoped that General de Gaulle would be able to settle matters with him (General Giraud) and form a single party of resistance. He assured General de Gaulle that support of him and of Fighting France remained a basic element in British policy. General de Gaulle agreed about the need of unity, and regarded General

<sup>1</sup> A part of the text of this telegram, which was sent on the night of December 9-10, is printed in Churchill, IV, 572-3. At the time of the Christmas parliamentary recess—and before Admiral Darlan's death—the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet had reason to expect very strong criticism, after the reassembly of Parliament, about the political situation in North Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Darlan was assassinated on December 24, 1942. The assassination was apparently organised by a small French group of royalist sympathisers in North Africa. This group seems to have hoped that, if Admiral Darlan were out of the way, the Allies (with the possible support of General Giraud) might turn to the French pretender, the Comte de Paris.

Giraud as an excellent choice.<sup>1</sup> On November 10 General de Gaulle asked the Prime Minister for his good offices in favour of sending a mission to confer with General Giraud. Mr. Eden<sup>2</sup> thought the plan reasonable and mentioned it to the United States Ambassador. The President made no objection, but General Eisenhower thought it desirable to postpone the coming of the mission. After hearing of the negotiations with Admiral Darlan the French National Committee also decided on postponement. General de Gaulle wanted to publish a communiqué dissociating himself and the Committee from the American action in recognising Admiral Darlan. At the request of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden he waited for two days. He then announced that he and the French National Committee were taking no part in the negotiations with the representatives of Vichy and could not accept any confirmation of the Vichy régime in North Africa.

On November 19 General de Gaulle and M. Pleven<sup>3</sup> brought to Mr. Eden messages showing the serious effect upon the Resistance Movement in France of the American political negotiations in North Africa. General de Gaulle, however, did not think it impossible to come to an agreement with the French authorities in North Africa to unite the French Empire in the war if Admiral Darlan were removed from office; he suggested the establishment of an enlarged National Committee at Algiers with General Catroux as High Commissioner or Delegate-General, and General Giraud in charge of military affairs. After Admiral Darlan's assassination and the appointment (with British approval) of General Giraud as High Commissioner, General de Gaulle repeated to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden his view of the need for a single French authority rather than (as the Americans seemed to favour) a federation of which the Fighting French would form part. He had sent a message to General Giraud on December 25 proposing a meeting in Algeria or the Lake Chad region<sup>4</sup>. General Giraud's answer—received on December 31—was

<sup>1</sup> General de Gaulle, however, spoke more critically to Admiral Stark about General Giraud.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister was not available at the time for consultation, but agreed later with Mr. Eden's action.

<sup>3</sup> M. Pleven had succeeded M. Dejean as Commissioner for Foreign Affairs in October, 1942.

<sup>4</sup> General de Gaulle had sent his message through the United States Embassy in London. The Embassy appears not to have regarded the message as urgent, and not to have despatched it until the late afternoon of December 26 or sent a copy to President Roosevelt until (on December 27) Mr. Eden asked them to do so. General Giraud did not receive the message until December 28. The French National Committee was suspicious at this delay, since they already considered the United States Embassy and military headquarters in London, and Mr. Murphy in Algiers, to be strongly anti-Gaullist. These suspicions that the Americans did not want General de Gaulle and General Giraud to join forces were increased by a message from the President on December 25 postponing—for a second time—a visit by General de Gaulle to the United States. The President gave no reason for the postponement, but the French National Committee noted that representatives of General Giraud were already in the United States conferring with the State Department.

that, owing to the excitement after Admiral Darlan's assassination, the time was not yet suitable for a meeting between General de Gaulle and himself. He suggested that General de Gaulle should send a representative to arrange for the cooperation of the French armed forces now engaged against the common enemy. This message said nothing about General de Gaulle's proposal for a central French authority. The French National Committee therefore issued a statement pointing out that, without even a provisional governmental authority of some kind, Frenchmen would be fighting on the Allied side but there would be no political representation of French interests. The Committee proposed that a provisional government would take a place as a fifth unit in the United Nations.

General de Gaulle replied to General Giraud that they might meet at Fort Lamy, Brazzaville, or Beirut, if Algiers were not possible. General Giraud answered on January 5 that he had no free time before the end of the month. No arrangement had been made when the Prime Minister on January 16 invited General de Gaulle to Casablanca for discussions with General Giraud.<sup>1</sup> This invitation followed an attempt by the Foreign Office to get Anglo-American agreement on a common policy towards the French Empire. Mr. Eden instructed Lord Halifax on January 2, 1943, that we thought it desirable to propose the establishment in Algeria of a single authority in place of the French National Committee in London and General Giraud's administration in Algiers. We should recognise such an authority not as a provisional government but only as a *de facto* administration until the establishment of a government chosen by the French people themselves. We could, however, treat the administration as an Allied Power which could be admitted to membership of the United Nations and exchange representatives informally with other Governments.

The Foreign Office regarded Anglo-American agreement on the matter as necessary for urgent reasons in North Africa and also in order to put an end to friction between the two Governments. In spite of the many explanations given to him Mr. Hull continued to complain about British support of General de Gaulle, and, on the other hand, to ignore the manifest incapacity of General Giraud. He regarded the British proposal for a central French authority as likely to lead to 'political jockeyings' which would hamper the French

<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-American military conference at Casablanca opened on January 14, 1943. See below, pp. 436-7. The President had written to Mr. Churchill on December 14 that they would need 'no Foreign Affairs people' with them, since their work would be 'essentially military.' (See Churchill, IV, 599.) The Prime Minister accepted this view. Hence neither Mr. Eden nor Sir A. Cadogan went with him to Casablanca. Mr. Hopkins accompanied the President, and both Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Murphy attended the conference, but the absence of any other British or American 'political' or senior diplomatic representatives had the indirect effect of making an invitation to General de Gaulle even less attractive, since he was not asked to take part in the military conversations. (See also, below, p. 217, note 1).

military effort; he was also afraid that a *de facto* French authority would consider itself the government of France after the liberation of the country. Mr. Eden therefore gave Lord Halifax on January 15 yet another note of explanation for the State Department. The note repeated that there was no question of recognising the French National Committee even as a provisional government, but that General de Gaulle deserved the measure of support which we had given, and would continue to give to him. In spite of difficulties caused by his personality, General de Gaulle worthily represented French resistance and—whatever his feelings might be towards Great Britain—believed that the future of France lay with the Anglo-Saxon Powers and Russia, and not, as the collaborationists believed, with Germany. He was supported by people of all shades of opinion in France, especially Left opinion, and we thought it right to hand over to him—rather than take the risks of compounding with a régime of doubtful loyalty—those parts of the French Empire liberated by us from Axis control. We were not backing General de Gaulle for first place in North Africa, but we thought that, in an agreement on the lines we had suggested, General de Gaulle could bring a valuable contribution, namely, a substantial part of the French Empire, and a great and resounding name. We hoped therefore that the United States Government would come to look upon him with more understanding and sympathy.

Before these instructions reached Lord Halifax, Mr. Macmillan, who had arrived at Algiers on January 2, 1943, had agreed with General Eisenhower and Mr. Murphy on certain lines of policy. They recognised that there was wide dissatisfaction at the existing political arrangements and that it was necessary to get rid of the many former collaborationists with Vichy who were still in high office, and to prevent further victimisation of Allied supporters. They regarded an early understanding between Generals de Gaulle and Giraud as essential. General Eisenhower agreed with the British proposal for a unified French administration. On January 14 Mr. Macmillan left for Casablanca to meet the Prime Minister and the President. Here he found that they had already decided to invite the two generals to a discussion, and that they had in mind an agreement on less comprehensive lines than the plan proposed by the Foreign Office. The Prime Minister had taken the lead in suggesting the invitation and drawing up the terms of an agreement. These terms, at the President's wish, did not go as far as an immediate fusion between the French National Committee and General Giraud's administration, but were limited to a reconstruction of each of the two bodies to include representatives of both parties. A fusion might take place later. The proposals also allowed for the appointment of British and American advisers to the two reconstituted committees.



The Secretary of State was asked for an opinion on these proposals. He replied on January 22 that General de Gaulle would regard as incomplete any arrangements which did not establish for the whole of the French Empire a central authority, with himself as chairman and General Giraud as commander-in-chief, and that he would object to the participation of British and American political advisers. Meanwhile, however, General de Gaulle nearly wrecked the future of the French National Committee and the chances of any French union. He refused (while General Giraud accepted) the invitation to Casablanca. He told Mr. Eden on the morning of January 17 that he did not wish to meet General Giraud under the auspices of the Allies since they might press him to accept a compromise. He was willing to meet General Giraud alone at Fort Lamý. The right course for General Giraud was to rally to the Fighting French. He could then become a member of the French National Committee and be appointed Commander-in-Chief. Mr. Eden said that he would regret a refusal by General de Gaulle to cooperate with the Allies in winning the war. General de Gaulle answered that, if victory were won for the Vichy elements, France would not have won much. General de Gaulle agreed to think over the matter, but he came back in the afternoon with a message of refusal in which he repeated his argument that he wanted 'simple and direct talks between French leaders,' and not conversations conducted in 'the atmosphere of an exalted Allied forum.'

Mr. Eden and Sir A. Cadogan pointed out that the invitation proposed direct talks between the two Frenchmen, and that General de Gaulle would also have a chance of explaining his position to the President. General de Gaulle answered that, if the President wished to see him, he could ask him to America. On January 18 the Prime Minister sent another message in which he told General de Gaulle that the invitation came from the President as well as from himself. Mr. Churchill warned General de Gaulle that if he refused the invitation, the President would not ask him to the United States, and the British Government would have to review their relations with the Fighting French Movement while he (General de Gaulle) remained as its head. In a covering message to Mr. Eden the Prime Minister said that if General de Gaulle did not take the chance offered to him, we could no longer recognise him as head of the Movement.<sup>1</sup> General de Gaulle did not answer on January 19. At

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's telegram, see Churchill, IV, 610. Mr. Macmillan suggested on January 18 and again on January 20 that General Giraud should invite General de Gaulle to Casablanca in reply to the latter's proposal for a meeting. The Foreign Office later thought it unfortunate that the Prime Minister and the President had not accepted this suggestion. General de Gaulle told Mr. Macmillan on January 24 that he regretted that military questions should have been settled at the conference without reference to France. He said that he would have come immediately if he had been invited to take part in the military work of the conference.



midnight on January 20-21 Mr. Eden telegraphed that the General had at last decided to accept the invitation. Owing to bad weather his flight was postponed. He did not reach Casablanca until midday on January 22.

Whatever the logic of General de Gaulle's attitude from his own point of view, he had put the Prime Minister, who had been arguing on his behalf, into an embarrassing and indeed absurd position.<sup>1</sup> He had also given a strong argument to those Americans who had always regarded him as an obstacle to French unity. Even so he might have done something after his belated acceptance to repair the effects of his earlier refusal, but he continued to insist that the Fighting French alone had maintained 'l'idée française' and that General Giraud—whom he regarded as a man of Vichy—must rally to them. General Giraud in turn rejected this plan. It was thus obvious that no agreement would be reached without strong Anglo-American pressure. There were also signs that the President, with the support of Mr. Murphy, was inclined to break with General de Gaulle. Mr. Macmillan, however, and on the American side, Mr. Hopkins, worked to bridge the gap between the two French leaders. General de Gaulle was willing to accept—on certain conditions—a kind of co-equality—a fusion between the two French organisations by means of a Conseil de Guerre of which the two Generals would be alternate chairmen. No agreement could be reached over the detailed arrangements, or even over the terms of a common declaration. Finally, after the President and the Prime Minister had left the conference, the staffs of the two Generals settled the terms of a brief communiqué announcing their meeting, and declaring their agreement on the common purpose of the liberation of France, and the union, in this purpose, of all Frenchmen fighting with the Allies.

On January 27 Mr. Murphy communicated to Mr. Macmillan two documents which shewed only too plainly the reasons for General de Gaulle's distrust of the Americans. These documents had been approved by the President. The first—described as a *résumé* of agreements in principle reached with General Giraud—dealt with the re-equipment of the French forces in North Africa, and also stated that the President and the Prime Minister agreed that General Giraud should be given every facility for bringing about the union under a single authority of all Frenchmen fighting against Germany. The second document recognised General Giraud as having 'the right and duty of preserving all French interests' until the French people were able 'to designate their regular Government.' The document also

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<sup>1</sup> On hearing of General de Gaulle's refusal to accept the invitation sent to him, President Roosevelt merely laughed.

laid down that the 'form of relations between France and foreign Powers temporarily occupying French territory' had been 'defined in a letter exchanged between Consul Mr. Murphy in the name of President Roosevelt and General Giraud before the landing.' The details of the understanding were to be worked out by General Eisenhower and Mr. Murphy in the light of conversations already held in Washington with General Giraud's representatives and of the decisions taken at Casablanca by the President, Mr. Churchill, and General Giraud.

Mr. Macmillan thought that the President had not seen these documents until just before leaving Casablanca and that in the pressure of business he had not realised their significance. He could not have intended to endorse the idea of a sole trusteeship for General Giraud. The Foreign Office telegraphed to Mr. Macmillan on January 29 that the two documents should be held in suspense until the British Government had had a chance of considering them. We could not agree to a sole trusteeship for General Giraud, or allow the 'elaboration of the details' by General Eisenhower and Mr. Murphy, apparently without reference to the British Government and on the basis of Franco-American conversations in Washington about which we knew nothing and decisions at Casablanca of which we had no record.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister, who did not return to London until February 7, telegraphed in answer to an enquiry from Mr. Eden that he had not seen the documents and that the President had not consulted him about them. The Prime Minister saw Mr. Murphy at Algiers on his way back to England, and agreed with him on a revised text to meet the Foreign Office objections. There was, however, a long delay on the American side before the text was finally settled. The text was given to General Giraud on May 28 jointly by Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Murphy. In its final form, it stated that every facility would be given to General Giraud and to the French National Committee under General de Gaulle to bring about the union under a single authority of all Frenchmen fighting against Germany.

(iii)

*Further British attempts to bring about a settlement between General de Gaulle and General Giraud: establishment of a French Committee of National Liberation: recognition of the new Committee, August 26, 1943.*

At the time when it was signed the agreement with General Giraud was already out of date on the political side. Between the Casablanca

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office also pointed out that we could not agree that the relations between France and foreign Powers other than the United States could be regulated by an agreement between an American official and a French general.

Conference and the end of the Tunisian campaign on May 13, Mr. Eden in London and Mr. Macmillan in Algiers tried to bring about a settlement between General de Gaulle and General Giraud. Apart from the difficulty that, whatever form a united French organisation might take, neither General would yield the leading place to the other, the American official attitude towards the Gaullists continued, in the Foreign Office view, to be prejudiced and unreal; in the case of some of the President's advisers there was almost an element of personal animosity which, as the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had so often pointed out, General de Gaulle's own attitude did nothing to lessen.

The Foreign Office were quicker than the State Department and, for that matter, the Prime Minister, to realise that, if French support were to be secured after an Allied landing, and if civil war were to be averted after the liberation of the country, the Allies must come to an arrangement with the political groups acceptable to the French people, and there must be some form of central organisation and authority in order to ensure that Frenchmen outside the area of German occupation at least agreed about matters such as the appointment and dismissal of officials—prefects, mayors, etc.—and the selection of liaison officers to be attached to an Allied expeditionary force. The Foreign Office, again, were in no doubt that General de Gaulle was gaining the support of the Resistance groups in France, and that General Giraud, owing to his lack of political judgment and his association with Pétainist and reactionary groups in North Africa, was losing ground, in spite of American backing.

The negotiations between the two Generals dragged on until June. In the middle of March an agreement seemed near. The French National Committee, while maintaining their proposal that General Giraud and his Administration should join an enlarged National Committee, had put forward terms of military, economic and diplomatic cooperation in advance of a general agreement. General Giraud on his side made a public speech on March 14 accepting—indirectly—the main points in the proposals of the National Committee. The Foreign Office thought that the British and United States Governments should welcome this progress, and state that they now saw no difference of principle between the aims of General Giraud and those of the National Committee. Mr. Hull issued a statement supporting General Giraud's declaration; the Prime Minister, in answer to a parliamentary question, spoke on the lines suggested by the Secretary of State, and Mr. Hull announced his agreement with the Prime Minister's statement. Even so the problem of French union was not solved, and once more Mr. Eden, in addition to persuading the Prime Minister, had to argue the case of the French National Committee with the Americans and at the same time prevent General

de Gaulle from wrecking this case by his own inflexibility. Finally after prolonged discussions, which nearly broke down for personal reasons, an agreement was reached on June 3 for a new Committee of National Liberation. General de Gaulle and General Giraud were co-Presidents. The Committee was described as the French central authority, exercising its powers over the territory and forces hitherto under the authority of the French National Committee or of the civilian and military Commander-in-Chief (i.e. General Giraud). The Committee proposed to take at once all measures necessary for the administrative fusion of the two organisations. It pledged itself to reestablish the laws of the French Republic and the republican régime, and to surrender its powers to a provisional government which would be constituted as soon as the liberation of the metropolitan territory of France allowed, and, at the latest, on the total liberation of the country.

In spite of these solemn affirmations of unity, the trouble was not yet over. General de Gaulle resigned within a week over the question of the control of the French forces. The President sent a message to Mr. Churchill on June 17 suggesting in strong terms that the time had come to break with General de Gaulle.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Macmillan, however, reported that the moderates on the Committee were proposing a compromise; with the support of General Eisenhower they persuaded the two Generals—after the familiar refusals—to agree to an arrangement setting up a permanent military committee, including both of them, with responsibility for the unification, organisation, and training of the armed forces. The National Committee would be responsible for the general direction of the French war effort and would control all the French forces: General Giraud would be Commander-in-Chief in North and West Africa, and General de Gaulle in other parts of the French Empire.

Meanwhile on June 7 the Foreign Office had received a request from the Committee for official British recognition of their status as 'qualified to ensure the conduct of the French effort in the war within the framework of Allied cooperation as well as the administration and defence of all French interests.' From the Prime Minister's point of view the advantage of the new arrangement was, as he told Mr. Roosevelt on June 6, that it brought to an end his official connexion with General de Gaulle as leader of the Fighting French, and enabled

<sup>1</sup> The President's attitude at this time seems to have been affected not only by General de Gaulle's wish to control the army, but by a misunderstanding over measures taken by the Committee to form an inner Cabinet responsible for the French conduct of the war and a Commissariat for the discharge of business. These measures involved an increase in the numbers of the Committee. The President and the Prime Minister took the view that General de Gaulle intended to use the increase in numbers as a means of 'packing' the Committee with his own supporters. Mr. Macmillan reported that on the military question the majority of the Committee supported General de Gaulle's view that General Giraud had not sufficient professional knowledge to deal with the modernisation of the army.

him to transfer the relationship to the new Committee as a body. Mr. Churchill stated in the House of Commons on June 8 that the formation of the Committee 'with its collective responsibility' superseded the situation created by his correspondence with General de Gaulle in 1940. The Prime Minister said that the 'further and larger question' of the 'degree of recognition' of the Committee as 'representative of France' required consideration by the British and United States Governments; if things went well, a solution satisfactory to all parties might 'shortly be reached.' For a time things did not go well, but after the settlement of the dispute over the control of the armed forces, the Foreign Office thought it desirable to take up the 'further question' with the United States and Soviet Governments. Mr. Eden circulated a memorandum to the War Cabinet on July 2 suggesting a limited recognition. The Prime Minister at first regarded Mr. Eden's proposals as 'altogether premature,' but on hearing that General Eisenhower and Mr. Murphy were in favour of immediate recognition he agreed to ask the President for his opinion and to send him the proposed British text.

On July 13 Mr. Eden sent to the Prime Minister a Foreign Office memorandum dealing generally with the question of British and American policy towards France. This memorandum stated that the United States Government appeared not to want a strong central administration for the French Empire to be built up in Algiers. They would prefer, if possible, to deal separately with each part of the Empire, and considered that any French authority should accept their demands without question. They had stated officially that they favoured the integral restoration of the French Empire, but the President had suggested privately that Indo-China and certain French islands in the Pacific should be placed under United Nations trusteeship and that Dakar and Bizerta should be held as bases by the United States and British Governments respectively. The President had also spoken of detaching an area in northeast France, including Alsace-Lorraine, for incorporation into a new buffer state.<sup>1</sup> Some at least of the governing authorities in Washington seemed to have little belief in the future of France and did not wish to see her restoration as a great Imperial Power.<sup>2</sup>

Our views were very different. We had declared our intention of restoring the greatness and independence of France. We did not want any French territory, or approve of policies aiming at the disintegration of colonial empires. Our main problem after the war would be to contain Germany. The Anglo-Soviet treaty was signed to secure Soviet collaboration for this purpose; we also needed a powerful

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 439-41.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Benes, after a visit to Washington, had described the American attitude as anti-French rather than anti-Gaullist.

France in the west, whether or not the United States collaborated in the maintenance of peace in Europe. France had twice stood between us and the assault of the German aggressors. We should have regard to the sensitiveness of the French, which was natural in the circumstances, and do our best to build up their self-confidence. Hence, while we should concert our policy with the Americans, we ought not to allow it to be governed by them. It was not to our interest that the feeling which was growing in France against the Americans should be directed also against us. Europeans in general expected us to have a European policy of our own aiming at the support of all who were resisting the common enemy at great peril to themselves.

The Prime Minister himself drew up a note about American policy towards France. He wrote that he was unwilling to quarrel with the United States over General de Gaulle or to allow any dispute in the matter to offset his own relationship with the President. He was disquieted about General de Gaulle's future attitude towards Great Britain, and also about the likelihood of opposition to him in France leading to civil war (which would be contrary to British as well as to French interests) after the liberation of the country. He thought that General de Gaulle's position in France would be much damaged if it were known that he was losing for the French the goodwill of the 'rescuing Powers' and especially of the United States. We had tried to bring about a union between General de Gaulle's committee and the French whom the Americans supported in North Africa. We ought to allow time for the new Committee to acquire a collective character. If, in the next few months, it became clear that General de Gaulle and his party were not in control, we might secure from the President the kind of recognition which we had proposed. Meanwhile we should continue to deal with the Committee on a *de facto* basis, but any formal recognition would cause the greatest offence in Washington.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office thought that the Prime Minister was regarding Anglo-American relations too much in terms of his own relations with the President and that his policy towards France was influenced too much by his distrust of General de Gaulle. The Prime Minister and the President seemed to leave out of account the damaging effect in France of the American official attitude towards General de Gaulle. The Prime Minister, however, was influenced by further reports from Mr. Macmillan that General Eisenhower and Mr. Murphy were advising immediate recognition. The President had not replied to the telegram in which Mr. Churchill had sent him the proposed British formula of recognition. Mr. Churchill sent another telegram on July 21 that the Foreign Office and his colleagues in the Cabinet

<sup>1</sup> After reading the Foreign Office paper, the Prime Minister decided not to circulate his note to the War Cabinet.

were putting considerable pressure on him and that 'force of circumstances' was leading us towards a recognition of the Committee.

The President replied on July 22 that he was moving towards a 'limited acceptance' of the Committee, though he wanted to avoid the term 'recognition.' The Foreign Office considered that this proposal would merely anger the French, and that the President was in fact proposing to grant the new Committee a lesser degree of recognition than we had given to the former Committee. The Prime Minister, however, did not think the matter urgent. He suggested that it could be postponed until the meeting of the Quebec Conference, and that after he had left for Quebec a message from him should be sent to the two Generals and other members of the Committee that he was going to try to settle with the President a satisfactory formula of recognition.

Mr. Eden argued the matter with Mr. Hull at Quebec, but failed to persuade him. Mr. Eden pointed out that our object in recognising the Committee was to build up its collective authority, and that a refusal would only strengthen General de Gaulle's personal position. Finally Mr. Eden said that, if they could not agree, each of the two governments must use its own formula. The Prime Minister told Mr. Roosevelt that the American formula would have 'a bad press,' but Mr. Roosevelt answered that he would rather have a 'sheet anchor' out against the machinations of General de Gaulle.

The British formula of recognition, which was presented to the French Committee on August 26 and published the following day, recognised the Committee as 'administering those French overseas territories which acknowledge its authority, and as having assumed the functions of the former French National Committee in respect of territories in the Levant.' The document noted 'with sympathy' the desire of the Committee to be regarded as the body qualified to ensure the administration and defence of all French interests. The British Government intended 'to give effect to this request as far as possible, while reserving the right to consider in consultation with the Committee the practical application of this principle in particular cases as they arise.'



## CHAPTER XI

The unconditional surrender of Italy: Italian 'co-belligerency': British attitude towards the demands of the Italian political parties (to June, 1944)

### (i)

*The military collapse of Italy: the fall of Mussolini and the formation of a government by Marshal Badoglio: Italian unconditional surrender (July–September, 1943).*

THE expulsion of the Axis forces from North Africa was less rapid than the Allies had hoped, but it had one expected sequel—the downfall of Italian fascism. Even before the Allied invasion of Sicily the British Government received overtures from Marshal Badoglio who had followed Mussolini into a war with the expectation of a rapid and easy victory and was now prepared to desert him in the hope of eluding the consequences of defeat.<sup>1</sup> In view of Marshal Badoglio's record, and of the obvious fact that until the Allies could give direct assistance, and the Italian people were threatened with war in their own country, there was little chance of an Italian move against the Germans, these overtures were not regarded as of much importance. After the invasion of Sicily, and the bombing of Italian targets on the mainland, the fascist Government collapsed. On July 25, 1943, the King of Italy was persuaded to dismiss Mussolini and order his detention. The fascist militia did not try to rescue him, or to oppose the King's appointment of Marshal Badoglio as head of a new government.

The new Government was, in a sense, as helpless as the dictatorship which it had overthrown. The general and overwhelming demand in Italy was for peace, but the Government could not make peace. An attempt to do so would merely reduce Italy from the status of a despised ally of Germany to that of a German-occupied country. German reinforcements had been arriving in Italy since May, and Marshal Badoglio's Government had no plans for resisting them, or even for preventing them from extending their control. The King and

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<sup>1</sup> Italian approaches had been made to the British Government in December, 1942. The Foreign Office was willing to listen to them, but did not think any successful revolt against fascist control likely until the military situation had become even more unfavourable to the Italians. Mr. Eden informed the United States and Soviet Governments of these approaches.

Marshal Badoglio therefore attempted—without success—to deceive the Germans by announcing that they would continue to fight in alliance with Germany; at the same time they hoped that the Anglo-American armies would rescue them from their absurd position.

On the Allied side, owing to the unwillingness of the Americans to commit themselves to an invasion of Italy,<sup>1</sup> there was no agreed plan for dealing with an Italian unconditional surrender.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office, after consultation with the Chiefs of Staff, had sent alternative draft proposals in June, 1943, to the United States Government. These drafts covered (i) the signature of 'articles of surrender,' i.e. an armistice with an Italian Government, (ii) an Italian collapse, with the consequence that there would be no government with which we could deal. The American view at this time was that we should not sign articles of surrender with an Italian Government, but that we should obtain a general 'unconditional surrender' from the King of Italy, Mussolini, or the Commander-in-Chief or all three, and the transfer of all powers to the Allies who would set up their own administration until other arrangements could be made. The Foreign Office pointed out that neither the King nor Mussolini would be likely to sign such a document, and that the Commander-in-Chief could hardly take responsibility on behalf of the whole nation. Furthermore the American plan might be held to amount in law to the cession of legal sovereignty over Italy to the United Nations. The legal rights of a 'military occupant' would not be enough for us, but we did not want to take over the burden of administering the country.

The Americans then agreed that a transfer of sovereignty would be undesirable and that it might be necessary to make use of an Italian administration. The only difference on procedure was thus on the question whether the Allied Commander-in-Chief should be entitled to deal on his own authority with a request for the termination of hostilities. Here the American view was that General Eisenhower should have this authority, and that he should control the country until the two Governments had come to a decision about its further administration. After the fall of Mussolini and the formation of the

<sup>1</sup> At the Casablanca Conference the President and his military advisers had not agreed to anything more than the occupation of Sicily. They were doubtful of the Prime Minister's proposals for the invasion of Italy, since they were afraid that British interests in the Mediterranean would divert Allied resources from the cross-Channel invasion which they considered essential to the rapid conclusion of the war in Europe. After a visit by the Prime Minister to Washington in May, 1943, and a further conference at Algiers the Americans still refused to agree in advance to an invasion of Italy. General Marshall recommended only the occupation of Sardinia and Corsica. General Eisenhower favoured an invasion of southern Italy if the attack on Sicily were a rapid success. No final decision was taken at Algiers, but General Eisenhower was instructed to make recommendations—not merely to set out alternative plans—in accordance with the progress made in Sicily.

<sup>2</sup> For the decision to demand unconditional surrender from the enemy, see below, pp. 436-7.

Badoglio Government the President and the Prime Minister exchanged messages about joint action if peace proposals were made. The President assumed that we should effect an Italian surrender by obtaining the signature of some Italian authority, and that the Allied Commanders would not conclude any general terms of surrender without the approval of the two Governments.

The next step therefore was to secure Anglo-American agreement on the terms of the articles of surrender. The Americans, having in mind principally the military advantages of securing a rapid Italian surrender, suggested two stages—the immediate signature of a document containing the military terms, and, later, the dictation of the political and economic terms to a civil administration. The British view was that, since we were willing to deal with the King and the Badoglio Government without committing ourselves to the maintenance of either of them, we should get the full terms of surrender signed at once.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise we could not be sure, after the fighting had stopped, of obtaining Italian assent to the civil as well as the military terms. The Foreign Office had prepared a draft of the full terms, so that, if there were Anglo-American agreement about them, General Eisenhower would not be kept waiting. The President was willing to tighten up the terms of a military surrender,<sup>2</sup> but still held to his view that General Eisenhower should be given a military document for immediate use, and that he should tell the Italian Government that details would be discussed later and settled by envoys appointed by the interested parties. The Prime Minister inclined to accept the American view. He regarded the military terms as analogous to the heads of a bill agreed by the Cabinet; the second stage—the actual draft—would follow. Mr. Churchill thought that we should not risk losing American goodwill by appearing to impose delay for the sake of a final legal draft.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Churchill, however, agreed on July 31, at Mr. Eden's suggestion, to telegraph to the President that

<sup>1</sup> For the text of a note entitled 'Thoughts on the Fall of Mussolini' drawn up by the Prime Minister after he had received the President's message, see Churchill, V, 52-4.

<sup>2</sup> The first American draft of the military terms did not mention the Allied right to impose measures of disarmament and demobilisation, to require the surrender of war criminals, to attack and seize German armed forces and war material, and to dispose of Italian merchant shipping. The document also did not refer to the Italian obligation to carry out the orders of the United Nations.

<sup>3</sup> On the other hand the Prime Minister agreed with Mr. Eden that it was undesirable for General Eisenhower to broadcast (as he had proposed to do) the military terms. The Foreign Office wanted to avoid the risk that the Italians, after accepting relatively easy military terms, should feel that we were imposing upon them—when they were disarmed—more stringent conditions. The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Roosevelt that there were 'great dangers in trying to dish this sort of dose up with jam for the patient.' (see Churchill, V, 56.) The Foreign Office regarded the danger of subsequent trouble as serious because the Italians were likely to put forward unrealistic claims for lenient treatment. They would exaggerate the value of any military assistance they could give. They would also forget the accumulated grievances which the democratic peoples had against them, and would assume that in getting rid of the fascist régime they had freed themselves from responsibility for its acts.

we hoped for agreement on the full text of an instrument of surrender, and that we could not understand why the President had not referred to the text which we had sent to him.<sup>1</sup> The President replied on August 3 that he thought that the terms sent to General Eisenhower were adequate and doubted the advisability of using the longer Instrument of Surrender.

As the Foreign Office had expected, the Italian approaches were not made to General Eisenhower. Between August 4 and 15 three different envoys approached the British representatives at Lisbon, Tangier, and Madrid on behalf of Marshal Badoglio. The Foreign Office thought it necessary to make clear to Marshal Badoglio that the Allies intended to enforce unconditional surrender and not to involve themselves in negotiations about terms. The Prime Minister<sup>2</sup> agreed generally with the Foreign Office view, though he wanted also to let the Italians feel that, while they had to make a 'formal act of submission,' we intended to treat them with consideration. 'Merely harping on "unconditional surrender" with no prospect of mercy held out even as an act of grace may well lead to no surrender at all.' Mr. Churchill thought that we might use the term 'honourable capitulation' already employed by the President.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Eden replied that, since we had stated in public our demand for unconditional surrender, and Marshal Badoglio had spoken only of 'negotiation,' we must keep to our demand. We could, however, say that the Prime Minister and the President had already said that we wished to see Italy occupy a respected place in the new Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Signor Berio, of the Italian Foreign Office, who had made the approach at Tangier, was given an answer in these terms on August 14. On the following day another approach was made to Sir S. Hoare at Madrid by two Italians. One of them, a General Castellano,<sup>5</sup> brought an official statement from Marshal Badoglio that the Italians wanted peace, but that, in view of the increasing German pressure, they could do nothing until the Allies landed on the mainland. In the event of an Allied landing, the Italians were prepared to join the Allies and fight against Germany. Sir S. Hoare asked what was the

<sup>1</sup> See Churchill, V, 58-9.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister left England for Quebec on August 5. Mr. Eden joined him there on August 18.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's telegram, see Churchill, V, 91.

<sup>4</sup> See Churchill, V, 92.

<sup>5</sup> General Castellano was Chief of the military office of General Ambrosio, Chief of the Italian General Staff. He was travelling ostensibly to meet the returning Italian Ambassador from Chile at Lisbon. He therefore had to return to Italy with the Ambassador. The latter's arrival was delayed, and General Castellano did not go back to Rome until August 25. The Italian approach to the British Embassy at Lisbon had been made on August 4 by an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He did not mention any peace terms, but described the situation in Italy in similar terms to those used by General Castellano.

Italian answer to the demand for unconditional surrender. General Castellano said that they were not in a position to make terms. They would accept unconditional surrender if they could join the Allies in fighting the Germans. In reporting this offer to the Prime Minister on August 16 Mr. Eden said that the only military advantages in the Italian offer were unopposed landings and Italian cooperation in running railways, ports, etc. We could be reasonably sure of this collaboration even if we insisted on unconditional surrender. In any case military cooperation on the terms put forward by General Castellano would mean that the Italians retained their arms—including their fleet—and that they would probably claim, later, Allied status. Mr. Eden therefore thought that Mr. Churchill would wish to give an answer similar to the reply to Signor Berio.<sup>1</sup>

Before Mr. Eden's arrival at Quebec, however, the Prime Minister and the President had decided that they must answer General Castellano at once, and in terms which would encourage the Italians to fight the Germans. They considered—with the support of the Combined Chiefs of Staff—that the advantages of getting Italy to change sides outweighed the political risks later of any trouble over the terms of surrender. Acceptance of the Italian proposals seemed the best way to avoid the danger of the Germans setting up a 'quisling' administration in Rome or of a drift into anarchy. We were not making any bargain with the Italians; after unconditional surrender they would have to 'work their passage.' General Eisenhower was therefore instructed on the night of August 17-18 to send an American and a British staff officer to meet General Castellano at Lisbon, and to give him a copy of the military terms, with a statement that the unconditional surrender of Italy would be accepted on these terms and that the political, economic and financial terms would be communicated later by other means.<sup>2</sup> General Eisenhower was instructed to add that the terms did not envisage active Italian assistance in fighting the Germans, but that the extent to which the terms might be modified would depend upon the amount of aid which the Italian Government and people provided during the remainder of the war against Germany.

The British and American representatives met General Castellano at Lisbon on the night of August 19-20. General Bedell Smith, the United States representative, told General Castellano that, on the assumption that the Italian armed forces were ready to surrender, he was authorised to communicate the terms upon which General Eisenhower would agree to an armistice. These terms constituted a military armistice only, and must be accepted unconditionally. General Castellano said that the purpose of his coming was not to discuss armistice terms, but to ask whether the Allies intended to

<sup>1</sup> For a note by the Prime Minister to the President on August 16, see Churchill, V, 92-3.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of these instructions, see Churchill, V, 94-5.

attack Italy, and, if so, to propose that Italian forces should join with them in expelling the Germans. General Bedell Smith repeated that he had brought with him the only terms which the Allies would accept, and that these terms must be accepted unconditionally. The question of Italian participation in operations against Germany was one of high policy which would have to be decided by the Heads of the British and United States Governments. General Castellano then listened to the terms. He tried again to raise questions about Italian collaboration, but General Bedell Smith again said that the Allied representatives were discussing a military capitulation, not an arrangement for the participation of Italy in the war on the Allied side.

The Allied representatives agreed that, if the Italian Government accepted the Allied terms, General Castellano should come to Sicily on August 31. Meanwhile on August 22 Mr. Eden telegraphed from Quebec that agreement had been reached on the full terms of surrender, and that he and Mr. Hull were recommending to the Prime Minister and the President that these full terms should be given to the Italians when they returned. There was an opportunity to make the full terms known because yet another envoy had arrived in Lisbon. This intermediary was General Zanussi, principal assistant to General Roatta, Chief of the Army Staff. The Foreign Office instructed Sir R. Campbell, British Ambassador at Lisbon, to ask General Zanussi to take the full text to Rome, so that General Castellano might be given powers to sign it. The Foreign Office also, with the approval of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, informed Mr. Macmillan of their action, but General Eisenhower did not want to introduce the full terms at this stage. The Allied landings in Italy were planned for September 3, and the overriding consideration in General Eisenhower's mind was to secure an immediate Italian surrender. He decided therefore that General Zanussi's interpreter should go back to Rome with a letter to General Ambrosio recommending the immediate acceptance of the military terms, and saying that the other clauses in the full Instrument of Surrender were only of relative importance.

These arrangements caused considerable disquiet in London. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Eden thought it unfortunate that General Zanussi had been allowed to tell the Italian Government that the non-military terms did not matter, and that General Eisenhower had used the phrase 'negotiations with emissaries.' They suggested on August 31 that, if General Castellano signed the short terms but would not sign the comprehensive terms on the grounds that he had no authority to do so, he should be told to take them back to Rome and get the necessary authority at once. The two British Ministers, however, withdrew this suggestion on hearing of the negotiations with General Castellano in Sicily and on getting Mr. Churchill's



view that General Eisenhower ought not to be worried over minor matters at a critical time when he needed all possible Italian assistance.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill pointed out that the fact of unconditional surrender overrode all detailed terms, and that the latter would be no more than instalments of directions issued to the defeated Power.

The document containing the military terms was signed in Sicily on September 3 by General Castellano on behalf of Marshal Badoglio.<sup>2</sup> The Italians had been unwilling to sign it unless they were assured that the Allies could guarantee the security of Rome where the King and Government intended to remain. General Eisenhower had therefore promised to send an airborne force to Rome, if the Italians would seize and hold the necessary airfields, stop all anti-aircraft fire, and fight the Germans in the Rome area. The Allied landing in Calabria began on September 3, but the Italians had been told that we should not require them to publish the armistice until the main landings, i.e. at Salerno, had taken place. On September 8—the day before the Salerno landings—the Italians sent a message that, owing to the presence of German forces in the Rome area, they found it impossible to announce or carry out the terms of the armistice, or to guarantee the availability of the aerodromes near Rome.<sup>3</sup>

General Eisenhower refused to accept these attempts at evasion. He suspended the plan to send an airborne force to Rome, but announced the Italian unconditional surrender. Marshal Badoglio was therefore compelled to carry out at least part of the agreed programme, including the surrender of a large part of the Italian fleet.<sup>4</sup> After the announcement of the Italian surrender the Foreign Office asked Mr. Macmillan to suggest to General Eisenhower that the Italians should be required to sign the full terms as soon as possible,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill said that owing to our delays the Germans might be as strong as ourselves, and able to build up their forces in Italy more quickly.

<sup>2</sup> General Castellano at first argued that the signature of a document containing terms of surrender was unnecessary because the Italian Government had already telegraphed their acceptance of the Allied conditions, and all that was now required was an arrangement for military cooperation.

<sup>3</sup> The Italians had not tried to prevent the Germans from seizing the airfields. After the announcement of the armistice the King, Marshal Badoglio, and such Ministers and senior officials who were able to escape, left Rome for Brindisi. In their haste they did not send adequate instructions to the small force guarding Mussolini in the Abruzzi. A body of German parachutists on September 12, without meeting any serious resistance, took Mussolini away to Northern Italy. Here, at Lake Garda, on September 15, Mussolini set up a 'quisling' fascist government of no importance. One of its first acts was to put to death the Fascists (including Ciano and Marshal de Bono) who had voted to deprive Mussolini of power in Italy. The establishment of this 'quisling' government, incidentally, offset any allegation that the acceptance of Marshal Badoglio's Government was a repetition of the policy adopted in accepting Darlan.

<sup>4</sup> The fleet suffered heavy casualties from German air attack while on its way to surrender at Malta. The surrender was of far-reaching importance since it freed a large number of Allied ships for service elsewhere. The Prime Minister, in particular, always had in mind that the King and Marshal Badoglio had done a service to the Allies in bringing over the fleet: British and American opinion generally took little notice of this silent change in the distribution of naval power. The Soviet Government, however, was fully aware of it, and put in a claim for a share in the captured ships.



since the absence of any detailed agreement covering economic and other matters was already causing inconvenience, and the longer we delayed, the more difficult we should find it to get Marshal Badoglio's signature. The President was still inclined to wait, but Stalin agreed with the British view.<sup>1</sup> The President therefore instructed General Eisenhower to get the full terms signed if he could do so quickly.<sup>2</sup> The full instrument was signed at Malta on September 29.

## (ii)

*Italian 'co-belligerency': the King of Italy, Marshal Badoglio, and the Italian political opposition: British attitude towards the opposition demands: Anglo-American differences of view on Allied policy towards Italy (October, 1943-June, 1944).*

As the Foreign Office had expected, the British and United States Governments were faced with difficult and troublesome political problems as soon as the Allied forces landed on the Italian mainland. These problems were harder to solve because there was a considerable divergence of view between the British and Americans on the treatment of Italy. British and Dominion troops had been fighting the Italians since 1940; the Italian entry into the war was an act of deliberate aggression which had been preceded by a long course of similar acts and was followed by an unjustified attack on Greece. British opinion could not forget the Abyssinian war, the Italian support of General Franco, Mussolini's boastfulness over the Rome-Berlin Axis, and the Italian attempts to undermine British influence in the Middle East. There was, however, little hostility to Italy in the United States. Mussolini's earlier acts of aggression had affected American interests only indirectly, and, indeed, by a curious paradox, American opinion had been more vocal in blaming Great Britain for failing to stop Mussolini's lawless acts than in blaming the Italian people for acquiescing in them. Moreover, there was a very large *bloc* of voters of Italian descent whose support the Administration could not afford to lose. This *bloc* was not fascist, but shared the

<sup>1</sup> Stalin had complained somewhat angrily that the British and Americans were not consulting or even informing the Russians adequately about the conditions to be imposed on Italy. He had asked for the immediate establishment of a 'military-political Commission' of representatives of the three Powers to discuss questions relating to the negotiations with governments dissociating themselves from Germany. The Foreign Office thought it desirable to accept this proposal, since it implied reciprocity on the Russian side in dealing with Germany and the East European satellites. At the Moscow Conference, however, in October, 1943, the Russians accepted the British proposal for a European Advisory Commission; the idea of a 'military-political Commission' was then dropped, and an Allied Advisory Council was set up for Italy. See below, p. 246, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Churchill, V, 171-2.

opinion of Italians in the home country that the mere fact of turning against Germany when the Germans were losing the war effaced the previous history of collaboration and justified Italian claims to treatment as an Ally. In addition, neither the President nor American public opinion realised the danger to public order in Italy from factional politics, and the risk that the Communists might be the ultimate beneficiaries. It was easier to assume that the British inclination to support, at least temporarily, the King and Marshal Badoglio was due to a special tenderness on the Prime Minister's part for monarchical and conservative régimes, and that Great Britain, for her own alleged imperialist designs in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, wanted to 'keep Italy down.'

The question of Italian status had to be settled at once. Marshal Badoglio asked for Allied or 'quasi-Allied' status if the Italian Government declared war on Germany.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Macmillan suggested the term 'co-belligerency.' The President agreed with this definition, but the difference between the British and American attitudes was shown in the drafts of the proposed announcement. The American draft did not mention the relevant facts that the Italian Government would be held to the armistice terms, and that the terms would be regulated according to the extent of the Italian contribution to the war against Germany. A form of words including a reference to these facts was agreed,<sup>2</sup> and accepted also by the Russians on October 4, but Marshal Badoglio now wanted to postpone a declaration of war until the Italian Government had returned to Rome. The Prime Minister and the President, however, insisted that the declaration of war should be made at once. The King of Italy therefore declared war on Germany on October 13, and the Allies made their announcement on Italian co-belligerency.<sup>3</sup> This announcement—in the name of Great Britain, the United States, and the U.S.S.R.—mentioned the right of the Italian people to choose their own form of democratic government after the Germans had been driven from Italy. The Allies had made it clear that it might well be necessary to make earlier changes in the government and probably to agree to the abdication of the King of

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office did not expect Italian military cooperation to be of much value. General Eisenhower shared this view, and later experience, with certain notable exceptions, confirmed it. The Italian army was employed mainly in non-combatant services (some of which were often dangerous, e.g. bringing up supplies, clearing mines, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> See Churchill, V, 174-5.

<sup>3</sup> The United States Government also proposed that the King and Marshal Badoglio should issue a statement at the time of the declaration of war. The American draft directive to Marshal Badoglio about this statement contained the phrase 'and make it clear that Italy no longer is at war with Russia or any of the United Nations.' The Foreign Office pointed out (i) that Italy would still be technically at war with the United Nations, and (ii) that a separate reference to Russia might suggest that the U.S.S.R. was not one of the United Nations.

Italy, whose miserable record justified his unpopularity. The British Government favoured postponing important political changes at least until the occupation of Rome.

The difficulty of broadening the basis of the Badoglio Administration was that the survivors of the pre-fascist régime were elderly figures without much support in the country.<sup>1</sup> A generation of Italians had grown up without the accompaniments of free government such as a free press and the right of public meeting. The Communists alone had an anti-fascist organisation of some strength, but their cohesion rested largely on the facts that they shared many of the authoritarian features of fascism, and that they had the secret support of the Russians. In any case it was less easy to enforce a political *moratorium* when the liberation of Rome was seen to be a matter, not of weeks, but of months. The question of constitutional—or, as the Italians called it ‘institutional’—change was therefore one of timing, and again the President and the State Department were readier than the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office to make concessions to the more loudly expressed demands of a section of Italian opinion. The return to Italy of Count Sforza from exile in the United States caused further trouble. Count Sforza,<sup>2</sup> who was better known and more highly regarded in the United States than in Great Britain, wrote to Mr. Berle, Under-Secretary of State, on September 23, 1943, pledging his support, in somewhat vague terms, to the Badoglio Government. In view of his record as an anti-monarchist as well as an anti-fascist, the Foreign Office doubted whether he would keep his promise. They were not reassured by long statements which he made in England on his way back to Italy. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden regarded him as ambitious and untrustworthy.

Events showed almost at once that this estimate of Count Sforza was right. Marshal Badoglio was willing, and indeed, anxious to strengthen his Government by getting the support of the moderate opposition parties,<sup>3</sup> but Count Sforza, on arrival in Italy, refused to

<sup>1</sup> Signor Bonomi was 70, Signor Croce 77, and Count Sforza 70. Marshal Badoglio was 72. The Communist leaders were younger; Signor Togliatti was 50. Signor Croce's attitude, as shown in extracts from his diary (*Croce, the King and the Allies*, trans. S. Sprigge, 1950), took little account of the fact that the Anglo-American forces, in driving the Germans out of the country, were doing something which the Italians had failed altogether to do for themselves, and that the Allies therefore had a moral right to expect leading Italians to ‘damp down’ political activities likely to hamper the course of military operations. Signor Croce wrote on November 13, 1943: ‘English policy . . . wants Italy as a battlefield, but wants to leave its people in a condition of inferiority and impotence so as not to be embarrassed by Italy in the alterations to be made in Europe.’

<sup>2</sup> Count Sforza, who had been Foreign Minister in 1920–1, had left Italy in 1927, and had lived in Belgium and France. He went to the United States, where he was already well known, in 1940.

<sup>3</sup> A declaration of the Allied Foreign Ministers at the Moscow Conference on November 1, 1943, included a statement that the Allies considered it essential that the Government should be made more democratic by the introduction of representatives of those sections of the Italian people who had always opposed fascism. See also below, p. 246, note 2.

join any government unless the King abdicated. Signor Croce supported him in this attitude. The King, however, refused to abdicate. The Foreign Office regarded Count Sforza as largely responsible for the crisis which now arose. They thought that we should have to accept a solution found by the Italians themselves. We did not want the responsibility of imposing a government on Italy, and, as the Prime Minister told the President, the King himself was 'nothing to us.'<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the combination of the King and Marshal Badoglio had rendered, and was rendering useful service. Hence the Foreign Office and, even more strongly, the Prime Minister, continued to recommend that for the time we should make no change, that is to say, in view of the difficulties in broadening the government, we should keep the King and Marshal Badoglio until the liberation of Rome. We were not thereby evading the Moscow declaration; the refusal of the anti-fascists at present available to join a government under the King, and the refusal of the King to abdicate left us with no alternative but to accept the present situation until we had reached Rome and the Italian people were better able to express their wishes.

General Eisenhower agreed with this view, and for the time there was further reason not to give way to the demands of Count Sforza. The leaders of the anti-fascist parties in Rome sent a message that they would support a Cabinet in which Marshal Badoglio would be military but not political chief on the two conditions that the question of broadening the government should be postponed until the occupation of Rome and that the final decision on a future régime should be left to an elected assembly after the liberation of the country.

At the King's request Marshal Badoglio therefore remained temporarily in office. He decided to give up the attempt to widen the political basis of his Government and, instead, to try to improve it administratively by the introduction of a number of experts. Count Sforza, in spite of his pledges, refused collaboration with this 'Government of technicians' and for the next two months there was a confused situation in which the politicians continued to insist upon the abdication of the King.<sup>2</sup> Once again the British and United

<sup>1</sup> See Churchill, V, 178-9.

<sup>2</sup> A meeting of such political leaders as could be brought together in the south took place at Bari at the end of January, 1944. This so-called 'Congress', which was given considerable prominence in the British and American press, set up an executive committee, or *Giunta* (usually spelt in British documents in the Spanish form *Junta*), representing the opposition parties. The Foreign Office did not regard the Junta as in fact representative, or consider that there was any reason for accepting its demands. The Americans, on the other hand, were more inclined to take the proceedings at Bari as evidence of Italian opinion in general. Count Sforza said at the 'Congress' that failure to get rid of the King would be an embarrassment to Italy at the Peace Conference when the Italians rose 'to defend the sacred borders of the fatherland and our old and honoured colonies.' Mr. Eden noted this statement as an indication of the attempt which the Italian so-called 'democrats' would make to escape from the penalties of the armistice.

States Governments had to decide whether their main purpose—the maintenance of order and the service of the Allied armies—would be served better by giving way to the opposition or by refusing any more drastic changes until the occupation of Rome made it possible to consult wider sections of Italian opinion. The Prime Minister remained convinced that immediate change was unnecessary and dangerous; the British military authorities were in favour of getting rid of the King. The Americans in general inclined to the military view, and there were somewhat confusing exchanges between the Prime Minister and the President, and between the State Department and the Foreign Office.<sup>1</sup>

The King himself now proposed to announce that, after his return to Rome, he would abdicate, and nominate the Crown Prince as Lieutenant-General of the Realm with full powers<sup>2</sup>, but a new turn was given to the situation early in March when the Soviet Government, without consulting their Allies, decided to open diplomatic relations with Marshal Badoglio's Government. This proposal had its disconcerting aspects; if the other Allied Powers also appointed Ambassadors while they were technically still at war with Italy, the status of the Allied Control Commission would be undermined. On the other hand the Soviet Government had shown that they were willing to work with the Badoglio Government, and to leave aside the question of the King's abdication until the occupation of Rome. The Russians qualified their policy by saying that Marshal Badoglio must do everything possible for the union of the democratic and anti-fascist forces in Italy, and must reorganise his Government to this end. Nevertheless the Russian attitude was decisive, since through the Italian Communist leader, Signor Togliatti—specially sent from Moscow for the purpose—they could influence the left-wing parties,

<sup>1</sup> For the Prime Minister's views, see Churchill, V, 439-40 and 444-7. On February 18 and 20, General Wilson\* reported to the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the British Chiefs of Staff his opinion that we should give way to the pressure put on us by the Junta and compel the King to abdicate. Since the President had agreed, for the time at least, to accept the view held by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office that it was undesirable to make any immediate change, the position was now somewhat absurd. The British Chiefs of Staff at once telegraphed to the British Joint Staff Mission at Washington that the political question was being considered by the Prime Minister and the President, and should not be dealt with by the Combined Chiefs of Staff; the State Department, however, had already received copies of General Wilson's telegrams, and had drafted a reply—which was approved by the President—in favour of his recommendations. The Prime Minister pointed out to General Wilson that he was putting forward proposals which he knew to be contrary to official policy. The War Cabinet and the Foreign Office agreed that it was most undesirable to make any changes under threats from the Junta that they could not prevent disorder if their proposals were not accepted. We might avoid criticism at home, and disagreement with the Americans if we gave way, but in the long run our acquiescence might cause us the greatest trouble.

\* General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson had succeeded General Eisenhower as Allied Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean after the latter's appointment to the command of the expeditionary force for the cross-Channel invasion.

<sup>2</sup> The King complained that his position had become impossible because the Allied authorities had allowed him to be discredited openly and attacked through the Psychological Warfare Branch headquarters and through lax censorship of the press.

and, if the Communists joined a reorganised government, the other parties could hardly keep out of it.

The result was another compromise.<sup>1</sup> The King agreed to announce his own abdication and the appointment of the Crown Prince as Lieutenant-General of the Realm. The formal transfer of power would not take place until the Allies entered Rome, but the King would state that he intended to withdraw at once from public affairs. On this basis Marshal Badoglio formed a new administration in which he maintained a balance, at least numerically, between the parties. The new Ministers (including Count Sforza, Signor Croce, and Signor Togliatti) pledged their acceptance of the obligations undertaken by their predecessors, and promised not to reopen the constitutional question until the Italian people as a whole were free to express their views.

In spite of these pledges Marshal Badoglio early in May made an appeal<sup>2</sup> to Sir N. Charles<sup>3</sup> that Italy should be given Allied status. The Foreign Office thought that there was a certain amount of blackmail in this demand. Marshal Badoglio was useful to us, but he was not indispensable. Moreover he could do nothing to check the spread of communism—the chief danger now apparent—in Italy. The grant of Allied status to Italy would cause grave dissatisfaction with the French, Greeks, and Yugoslavs, and be extremely troublesome at the Peace Conference. We might, however, offer Italy a preliminary treaty of peace as soon as the military situation allowed us to do so, and the Italian Government had authority to speak on behalf of the whole nation. Above all we should try to improve the economic condition of the country.

This proposal for a preliminary peace treaty, which would have included the British demands with regard to the fleet and the colonies, did not get far at this time because the Prime Minister regarded it as undesirable<sup>4</sup> and the United States Government showed little interest in it. In any case another sudden development made it unnecessary to consider buttressing the government of Marshal Badoglio. The Allies entered Rome on June 4, 1944. The appointment of the Crown Prince at once took effect. Marshal Badoglio resigned, and was

<sup>1</sup> The British Government would have preferred the King's plan to postpone his abdication until his arrival in Rome. The Americans wanted the Junta plan of immediate abdication in favour of the Crown Prince and the delegation by the latter of his powers to a 'Lieutenant-General of the Realm' (probably Signor Croce) until a constituent assembly had decided upon the future of the country. Mr. Murphy told Mr. Macmillan that the matter was of considerable domestic importance in the United States in view of the Italian vote in a difficult election year. The Prime Minister considered the retention of Marshal Badoglio as more important than the date upon which the King's abdication took place.

<sup>2</sup> Marshal Badoglio had addressed two similar appeals to President Roosevelt in April.

<sup>3</sup> Sir N. Charles had been appointed as High Commissioner and British Member of the Allied Advisory Council to succeed Mr. Macmillan.

<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister commented, on May 22, that it might well be that 'even when all the governments meet together, there will be no peace treaty after the fall of Hitler, but only a prolonged armistice.'



invited by the Crown Prince to form a new administration, but the party leaders—Marshal Badoglio's own colleagues as well as the politicians in Rome—decided that the head of the new government should be Signor Bonomi.<sup>1</sup> The Crown Prince and Marshal Badoglio gave way; Sir N. Charles was at Naples, and General Macfarlane did not tell the Italians that they had no legal right to act as they had done without obtaining the assent of the Allies.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister and the Foreign Office were astonished at this turn of events. Sir N. Charles was instructed that the British Government would not recognise the new Administration until they had consulted their Allies. The Prime Minister telegraphed on June 10 to the President that he was 'not aware . . . that we had conceded to the Italians who have cost us so dear in life and material the power to form any government they chose without reference to the victorious Powers and without the slightest pretence of a popular mandate.' Mr. Churchill also told Stalin that the 'present cluster of aged and hungry politicians' would try to push Italian claims, and might cause us the greatest possible inconvenience.

The President was also taken by surprise at the Italian action. He agreed with the Prime Minister that we should assert our right to be consulted, and that we should take the opinion of the Allied Advisory Council. He was, however, readier to accept the new Government on the grounds that we should find it an advantage to associate Italian obligations under the armistice with an anti-fascist Cabinet containing the most representative Italians as yet available. The Prime Minister himself now came to the conclusion that—subject to the assurances upon which we should insist—we should accept the *fait accompli* and not try to restore Marshal Badoglio. Sir N. Charles was therefore instructed to recommend to the Advisory Council the immediate recognition of the new Government. We should require the Ministers to accept in writing all the obligations, including the full armistice terms, entered into by previous Italian Governments, and to undertake not to reopen the constitutional question without the prior consent of the Allied Governments.<sup>3</sup> The Advisory Council met on June 17, and passed a resolution in these terms. The British and United States Governments then recognised the Administration on condition that the necessary assurances were given.

<sup>1</sup> Signor Bonomi had been a right-wing Socialist before 1914, and Prime Minister of a Coalition Government from June, 1921, to February, 1922. He had lived in retirement from open political activities during the fascist régime.

<sup>2</sup> General Macfarlane had been appointed Deputy President of the Allied Control Commission in Italy in January, 1944. He came back to England on sick leave immediately after these transactions in Rome. Sir N. Charles had been refused permission by General Clark to go to Rome. Mr. Eden considered that he should have appealed to London against this refusal.

<sup>3</sup> The State Department, according to a telegram from Lord Halifax, were prepared to recognise Signor Bonomi's Government before it had given any written assurances.



## CHAPTER XII

### Anglo-Russian relations in 1943: the Moscow and Teheran Conferences: the questions of the Russo-Polish frontier and of the Russian attitude towards the Polish Government

#### (i)

*Anglo-Russian relations from January to October, 1943: the Prime Minister's correspondence with Stalin on the postponement of the invasion of northern France: the Prime Minister's proposal for a tripartite meeting.*

IN a message of December 3, 1942, supporting the President's invitation to Stalin to a tripartite meeting the Prime Minister said that a decision had to be taken 'on the best way of attacking Germany in Europe with all possible force in 1943.'<sup>1</sup> Stalin refused the invitation, but referred in his answer to the question—which he mentioned in a message nine days earlier—of establishing a second front in western Europe in the spring of 1943. On December 14 Stalin repeated to the President his confidence that the 'promises about the opening of a second front in Europe' given by the President and Mr. Churchill 'in regard to 1942, and in any case in regard to the spring of 1943,' would be fulfilled.

The Russians continued to regard a 'second front in Europe' solely as a front established by the invasion of northern France. Stalin was therefore not satisfied with the summary sent to him on January 26, 1943, of the decisions reached at Casablanca. In this summary the Prime Minister and the President said that they believed that the Anglo-American and Russian operations might well bring about the decisive defeat of Germany in 1943, and that strong forces were being assembled in Great Britain for a re-entry into the Continent of Europe 'as soon as practicable.' Stalin asked for more detailed information, and the Prime Minister—with the President's approval—mentioned an operation in August or September, but with the qualifying phrase that 'the timing of this attack must of course be

<sup>1</sup> President Roosevelt had suggested on November 26, 1942, a meeting between representatives of the British, American, and Russian staffs. Mr. Churchill had replied that 'a meeting between principals' would be necessary in order to deal with the arguments which the Russians would certainly put forward about a second front in Europe. The President accepted this view, and on December 3 sent an invitation to Stalin. For the exchanges between the Prime Minister, the President, and Stalin, see Churchill, IV, 593-600.

dependent upon the condition of German defensive possibilities across the Channel.' Stalin replied on February 16 that he was disappointed at the reference to August or September. He thought that the 'blow from the West' should be delivered in 'the spring or in the early summer.' Owing to his illness,<sup>1</sup> the Prime Minister was unable to send a full answer until March 11. He then explained once again the military factors; he said that 'in case the enemy should weaken sufficiently,' we were preparing to attack earlier than August, but that, if there were no evidence of weakening, a premature attack would result only in a bloody defeat . . . 'The Channel situation can only be judged nearer the time, and in making this declaration of our intentions there for your own personal information, I must not be understood to limit our freedom of decision.'

In spite of his later assertions, Stalin did not misunderstand this message. He warned the Prime Minister on March 15 'in the strongest possible manner how dangerous would be from the view-point of our common cause further delay in the opening of the Second Front in France. This is the reason why the uncertainty of your statements concerning the contemplated Anglo-American offensive across the Channel arouses grave anxiety in me about which I feel I cannot be silent.'

For the next two months there was a deceptive lull in the Russian demands for a second front and in their complaints that the British in particular were not taking their full share in the war. At the end of March the Prime Minister, with the agreement of the President, told Stalin that, owing to the concentration of a strong German naval force, including the *Tirpitz*, in northern Norway, it was necessary to cancel the sailing of the March convoy to North Russia.<sup>2</sup> In any case we should have to discontinue the convoys for some time after May since all available escort vessels would be needed to support our offensive operations in the Mediterranean. Stalin replied that this 'unexpected action' would be a 'catastrophic diminution of supplies' which could not fail 'to affect the position of the Soviet troops,' but his next message was less bleak.<sup>3</sup>

During this interlude the Foreign Office thought it desirable to try to open up a general discussion with the Russians on post-war policy. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to ask whether the Soviet Government had any definite views about the future of Germany, and to say

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister was taken ill with pneumonia on February 16. For the text of the correspondence between the Prime Minister, the President, and Stalin, see Churchill, IV, 664-72.

<sup>2</sup> The Admiralty were unwilling to risk sending capital ships into the Barents Sea east of Bear Island, since they could not be protected from attack by shore-based aircraft. Without an escort of capital ships there was no chance of the convoy reaching Russian ports.

<sup>3</sup> For the correspondence between the Prime Minister and Stalin, see Churchill, IV, 675-8.

that we thought an agreement desirable on questions such as the mode of exercising Allied control. The Russian answers were not very friendly,<sup>1</sup> and the Secretary of State decided not to take the matter further. The Russian attitude towards the Poles<sup>2</sup> showed the difficulty of finding a common basis of discussion, and Stalin's resentment at the Anglo-American decision at the end of May to postpone a cross-Channel invasion until 1944 (except in the event of a German collapse in 1943) precluded any general conversations. A message explaining the military plans was agreed by the President and the Prime Minister, and sent to Stalin on June 2. Stalin replied to the President on June 11 complaining that the postponement would cause 'quite exceptional difficulties for the Soviet Union' and would make a 'painful impression on the Russian people and army.' He ended his message with the words: 'As far as the Soviet Government is concerned, it cannot join in this decision, which may have grave consequences for the further course of the war, and which moreover was taken without its participation, and without any attempt to consider together the question of such tremendous importance.'

Sir A. Clark Kerr telegraphed on June 14 that the restraint in the tone of the message should not lead us to think that Stalin was not feeling real resentment or that his faith in our intentions had not been severely shaken. Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that we should be unwise to disregard Stalin's last sentence. We could indeed make out a case for a reply to his objection that he was not consulted, but the position was that he could not leave Russia and that there was no one of sufficient calibre to represent him in a discussion with the Prime Minister and the President. 'Thus we find ourselves in the unhappy position of being in fact unable to consult him and at the same time of provoking his anger because we have failed to admit him to our counsels.' Sir A. Clark Kerr thought it urgently necessary to arrange a meeting between Stalin and the Prime Minister and the President.

The Prime Minister replied to Sir A. Clark Kerr that he was sending a 'soft answer' to Stalin, but that we had no reason to apologize to him. The Russians themselves 'destroyed the second front in 1939 and 1940, and stood by watching with complete indifference what looked like our total obliteration as a nation. We have made no reproaches, and we did our best to help them when they were in turn attacked.' The Prime Minister refused to allow 'a useless massacre of British troops' in order to remove Soviet suspicions. He added: 'I am getting rather tired of these repeated scoldings considering that they have

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister's comment to Mr. Eden on reading Stalin's reply to these questions on post-war arrangements was 'Please tell me what has happened to bring all this stuff up.' See also below, pp. 443-4.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 204-5.

never been actuated by anything but cold-blooded self-interest and total disdain of our lives and fortunes.'

The Prime Minister's reply to Stalin on June 19 once again pointed out the physical impossibility of carrying out a successful invasion in 1943. Mr. Churchill referred to his previous messages on the subject and said that the best way for us to help Russia was 'by winning battles and not by losing them.' He proposed a meeting between Stalin, the President and himself, and suggested Scapa Flow as a suitable place. Five days later Mr. Harriman told the Prime Minister of a proposal made to Stalin by the President in May for a meeting (without Mr. Churchill) in Alaska. Mr. Churchill telegraphed to the President that a tripartite meeting would be more desirable, and that enemy propaganda would make use of a Russo-American meeting from which the British Commonwealth and Empire were excluded. Mr. Churchill's visit to Moscow in August, 1942, was on a 'lower level,' and at a stage when we had only to explain why a second front could not be opened in 1942.

Stalin sent a long and argumentative reply to the Prime Minister on June 25 in which he again complained, angrily, that the Soviet Government had not been consulted on the strategic plans. The Prime Minister inclined at first to leave this message unanswered. He decided, however, to send an answer in which he pointed out once more the military reasons why we could not carry out the cross-Channel invasion. Mr. Churchill also telegraphed to the President on June 29 that in view of Stalin's message and his own reply, he had no objection to a meeting between him (Stalin) and the President 'if you can get him to come.' Mr. Churchill mentioned that the Russians might be considering a change of policy, but said that Mr. Eden and the Foreign Office were definitely of opinion that this was not the case, and that he (Mr. Churchill) agreed with them.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill's telegram crossed a message from the President explaining that he had not suggested a meeting with Stalin alone, but that Stalin had taken him to mean that the meeting was to be of this kind. Mr. Roosevelt had said that he would not bring any military experts, so that there would be no 'collisions' over a demand for a cross-Channel invasion. He asked Mr. Churchill whether he would come—soon after the meeting with Stalin—to a meeting in Quebec.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office received fewer rumours of Russo-German contacts in 1943 than in 1942. There were, however, reports from a neutral source in April, 1943, of peace conversations. In accordance with their practice of passing on rumours of this kind, the Foreign Office informed M. Molotov of them. M. Molotov stated that no approach had been made to the Soviet Government, or would be listened to by them. A second batch of rumours of Russo-German contacts came from Stockholm in August, 1943. The Foreign Office regarded them as of even less substance than the earlier reports, and thought their purpose was to cause trouble between the British and the Russians.

<sup>2</sup> The President said that he was sure that the Canadian Government would welcome them. Stalin did not send a final reply to the President's invitation until August 8. He then said that he could not be away from Russia during the summer and autumn.

He also agreed that a 'full-dress meeting' with Stalin should be held in the autumn.

Mr. Churchill replied at once repeating that he no longer opposed a meeting between the President and Stalin and that he would be glad to arrange for a meeting at Quebec. The Prime Minister also asked Sir A. Clark Kerr what the reactions of Stalin had been to his 'patient reply to Stalin's offensive message.' He thought that Stalin's message raised 'anxious questions' and that he had reached the end of the 'Churchill-Stalin correspondence' from which he had hoped for some kind of personal contact. Sir A. Clark Kerr sent a long answer on July 1. He thought that the weakness in our case, from the Russian angle, was 'not in our inability to open this second front, but in our having let [Stalin] believe we were going to.' He did not think that the Prime Minister's message would be 'the end of the Churchill-Stalin correspondence.'<sup>1</sup>

After the sharp exchange of messages in June the Prime Minister gave up for a time his personal correspondence with Stalin. A message of August 7, referring to the Quebec Conference, was transmitted as a note from the Foreign Office, but the note stated that the Prime Minister still hoped for a meeting of the three Heads of Governments. Stalin replied through the Soviet Embassy in London that he could not leave the battle front even for a week and hence could not come to Scapa Flow or 'any other distant point.' He suggested a meeting of 'responsible representatives' of the three States to decide upon the date and place and agenda of a meeting of the three Heads of Governments.<sup>2</sup> On August 18 the Prime Minister and the President sent to London for transmission to Stalin a joint message again proposing a tripartite meeting, possibly at Fairbanks (Alaska). If Stalin could not accept the proposal, they would agree to an 'exploratory' meeting of representatives at the 'Foreign Office level.' Stalin replied on August 25 that he could not come to Alaska; he agreed to the proposal for a meeting of 'representatives in charge of foreign affairs'. He thought that this meeting should not be merely exploratory, but should enable the three Governments to take definite decisions. After the usual wrangle over places of meeting, the three Heads of Governments agreed that the conference

<sup>1</sup> In a talk with Sir A. Clark Kerr in Moscow early in August, M. Maisky complained that the British Government did not make sufficient allowance for what he called the 'inferiority complex' of the Russians. 'We make them feel like country cousins and they minded because they knew that they were . . . We expected them to be as grown up and as metropolitan as ourselves. They were not, and we should remember that, for it was very important.' Sir A. Clark Kerr pointed out that 'if there were anything in this theory, it belonged to the past.' M. Maisky, however, claimed that 'we were still not treating his people as equals, as, for instance, we treated the Americans.' Sir A. Clark Kerr wrote: 'Again I protested, but in my heart I felt that he was right. I feel that we are still holding these people at an arm's length.'

<sup>2</sup> Extracts from the exchange of correspondence about the proposed meetings are printed in Churchill, V, 247-51.

of Foreign Ministers should be held in Moscow, and their own meeting in Teheran.<sup>1</sup>

## (ii)

*Political discussions at the Moscow Conference, October 19-30, and at the Teheran Conference, November 28-December 1, 1943.*

The Moscow Conference was on the whole a hopeful sign of Russian collaboration, though the most controversial post-war questions, e.g. frontiers, affecting the Soviet Union were not discussed at any length. Moreover the Russians were satisfied, from the military information disclosed to them, that the British and Americans really intended an invasion of northern France in the spring of 1944; they had also begun to understand—though they would not admit—that the Allied attack in Italy was more useful than a limited offensive in northern Europe in relieving pressure on the Russian armies. The meeting had indeed been preceded by another angry message from Stalin on the question of convoys, and a refusal to allow an increase in the numbers of British naval personnel in north Russia which the Admiralty considered necessary for the safe working of the convoys.<sup>2</sup> The latter question was settled in conversation when Mr. Eden was in Moscow, and the sailing of the convoys was resumed in November.

The agenda suggested by the Foreign Office for the Conference covered a large number of questions relating to the war and to important post-war problems, such as the treatment of Germany, upon which Allied agreement was desirable.<sup>3</sup> The American proposals were less detailed, but even wider in scope, since they included

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill, not unreasonably, suggested a place in Great Britain for the conference. (He mentioned Holyroodhouse or Windsor.) The President was willing to agree to Great Britain, but preferred somewhere less accessible to journalists, e.g. Casablanca or Tunis. Stalin insisted on Moscow for the Foreign Ministers' meeting. For the conference of the three Heads of Government Stalin proposed Teheran. The Prime Minister said that Egypt would be more convenient, and also suggested Cyprus or Khartoum. He offered Stalin the use of a British ship. The Foreign Office were sure that this offer would be refused since the Russians would suspect hidden microphones; they thought that Stalin would not go to any place outside Russia where he could not stay in a Soviet Embassy. Stalin, in fact, refused Egypt on the ground that the U.S.S.R. had no diplomatic representation there. The President at first refused to go to Teheran, but later agreed to the place when it had become clear that Stalin would not go anywhere else.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin had also complained on August 22 that the Russians were not being sufficiently informed or consulted about the conditions of an armistice with Italy. See above, p. 232, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> For the discussions on Germany, see below, pp. 446-7. The Prime Minister drew up a short ten-point statement, which was approved, with some changes, by the War Cabinet, for Mr. Eden's use at the Conference. This document (for the text, see Churchill, V, 251-2) represented the programme of maximum Anglo-American-Russian co-operation for which the British Government hoped at this time.



a plan for a four-Power declaration<sup>1</sup> (which the United States Government had already suggested at the Quebec Conference) providing for consultation and cooperation in the maintenance of world peace after the war. The main item put by the Soviet Government on the agenda was the consideration of measures for shortening the war in Europe.

At the opening session of the Conference M. Molotov brought forward the Soviet proposals. He asked whether the Anglo-American promise to undertake the invasion of northern France in the spring of 1944 remained valid, and proposed that the three Powers should invite Turkey to enter the war and Sweden to place at their disposal air bases for the bombing of Germany. On October 20 Mr. Eden and Mr. Hull said that the statements with regard to an invasion in 1944 remained valid and had been reaffirmed by the Prime Minister and the President at Quebec. General Ismay, who had come with Mr. Eden, and General Deane, on behalf of the United States, explained the military requirements of the invasion. General Ismay said that the operation would be practicable only if there had been a substantial reduction in the German fighter force in northwest Europe, and if the German mobile land forces and reserves in northern France did not amount to more than twelve divisions at the time of the landing, and could not be increased by more than about fifteen divisions within two months. He said that the British and Americans hoped that, as a result of their own air and military action, and of Soviet attacks in the east, these conditions would be fulfilled. The Anglo-American assurances were embodied in a 'most secret protocol' of the Conference, but the Prime Minister was disturbed on hearing of the Russian insistence upon an invasion of northern France by a given date without regard to the situation elsewhere, and especially in Italy. He asked Mr. Eden to warn Stalin that the assurances, which were themselves subject to specified conditions, about the invasion might have to be modified to the extent of a postponement until July. Mr. Eden and General Ismay therefore had a long and not unsatisfactory talk with Stalin and Molotov on October 29.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Eden did not think that we needed air bases in Sweden; in any case the Swedes would ask for air support which we might not be able to provide. Mr. Eden regarded Turkish participation in the war as desirable, but he asked, as in the case of Sweden, what inducements we had to offer. Furthermore we could not give Turkey more than a fraction of the air assistance which we had promised in the event of an attack. Mr. Hull agreed in each case with Mr. Eden. M. Molotov accepted their views, though he considered that we could

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. including China. See below, pp. 445-6.

<sup>2</sup> For the correspondence between the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, and a summary of the interview with Stalin, see Churchill, V, 254-61.

compel Turkey to come into the war.<sup>1</sup> On the political side Mr. Eden and M. Molotov accepted the American proposal for a declaration in which the four Powers would pledge themselves to continue their collaboration after the war and would recognise the necessity of establishing an international organisation for the maintenance of peace and security. The Conference also accepted the proposal put forward by Mr. Eden for setting up in London a European Advisory Commission to study, and make joint representations upon European questions connected with the termination of hostilities.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden circulated to the Conference a memorandum, in the form of a declaration, on the principles which should govern the liberation of Allied territory in Europe. This draft was in general terms to the effect that the three Governments desired the restoration of self-government as soon as possible in all Allied territory in Europe liberated from enemy occupation. The declaration was referred to the European Advisory Commission; it might have had a less easy passage if the Conference had discussed in any detail the question of Poland.<sup>3</sup> The differences of view between the British and Soviet Governments were less 'papered over' in the discussion of post-war federations. Mr. Eden wanted the three Governments to affirm the principle that each people would be free to choose its own form of government and way of life, provided that it respected equally the rights of other peoples. All States were therefore to be free to associate themselves with other States, and, in particular, the three Governments would assist the European States to form such associations, and would not 'seek to create any separate areas of responsibility in Europe.'

M. Molotov, however, thought that the establishment of federations would be a premature step. The émigré governments<sup>4</sup> in Europe would not be closely in touch with their peoples, and the federations might be interpreted as imposing upon these peoples decisions which they did not want. M. Molotov said that some of the plans for federations reminded the Russian people of the policy of the 'cordon sanitaire' formerly directed against the Soviet Union. Mr. Eden then

<sup>1</sup> For the discussions on Turkey, see below, pp. 325-6. M. Molotov also asserted a claim to a large share in the Italian fleet. See Churchill, V, 262-3.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden brought forward this proposal (which the Foreign Office wanted on general grounds) in relation to the Russian proposal for a political-military Commission (see above, p. 232, note 1). M. Molotov suggested that the Advisory Commission should direct the work of the various organs of control in Italy. Mr. Eden pointed out the practical difficulties in such a plan. M. Molotov then agreed that the European Advisory Commission should be kept distinct from the body dealing with Italian questions. For the latter the Conference set up an Allied Advisory Council. In order to remove Russian suspicions of Anglo-American policy in Italy, Mr. Eden, in addition to suggesting an Allied declaration on policy (see above, p. 234, note 3), explained fully the steps which were being taken to get rid of fascist influence in Italy.

<sup>3</sup> The draft was not, in fact, submitted to the Commission.

<sup>4</sup> Neither Mr. Eden nor Mr. Hull seems to have questioned at this time the application of the term 'émigré' by the Russians to legitimate Governments which had been forced to leave enemy-occupied territory.

agreed that the question might wait for later consideration. On the last day of the conference, however, he brought up again the two general points of freedom of choice of government and the disclaiming of 'separate areas of responsibility.' He proposed that these two points should be mentioned in the public documents of the Conference. The Russians argued that the three Powers had already agreed to work together for the general organisation of peace and that it was therefore hardly necessary to make a negative declaration.

The meeting of the three Heads of Governments at Teheran took place from November 28 to December 1; the absurd choice of place made a long stay impossible, especially for the President. The subjects for immediate decision were mainly military; apart from the Polish question, and the discussions on Turkey, the talks on political subjects were somewhat vague, and gave little indication of Russian intentions.<sup>1</sup> The military decisions, however, had a political importance of their own, since they registered a significant change in the American attitude towards their British and Russian Allies. The Prime Minister had wished to reach an Anglo-American agreement, before the discussions with Stalin, on the relation between the plans for the invasion of northern France and the operations in the Mediterranean. Mr. Churchill regarded the rigid American insistence upon the time-table agreed at Quebec, and therefore upon the withdrawal of seven divisions and a number of landing craft from the Mediterranean, as endangering the success of the Italian campaign, and making it impossible to regain control of the Aegean or bring Turkey into the war. The American military authorities did not want to reopen, or rather to continue the argument with Mr. Churchill. The President was also afraid of arousing Russian suspicions by holding lengthy Anglo-American discussions before the meeting with Stalin. He wished at this stage to get Russian collaboration in the war against Japan, and in his somewhat unclear plans for post-war security. He even suggested to the Prime Minister that a Russian representative should be invited to attend any Anglo-American meeting held before the Conference. The Prime Minister pointed out that the Russians did not invite British or American representatives to take part in the planning of their campaigns; that there were no Russian troops on the Italian front, and that there would be none in the cross-Channel expedition. Nonetheless the President invited M. Molotov and a Russian military representative to meet the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Cairo, and on the time-table proposed for these meetings there would have been hardly any opportunity for separate Anglo-American discussions.

<sup>1</sup> For the discussions on Poland, see section (iii) of this Chapter; for those on post-war questions, see below, pp. 447-8; for those on Turkey, see below, p. 327.

The President's plan fell through because he was also insisting on the presence at Cairo of General Chiang Kai-shek. The Russians refused to come to the meeting because they were not at war with Japan, but again Mr. Roosevelt made the Prime Minister's position more difficult by promising to General Chiang Kai-shek an amphibious operation in the spring of 1944 for the recapture of the Andaman Islands.<sup>1</sup> General Chiang Kai-shek arrived in Cairo before the President and the Prime Minister and there was, in fact, no time for adequate Anglo-American discussion. At the Teheran Conference the Russians supported the American military views against those of the Prime Minister. They wanted the cross-Channel invasion as early as possible. They regarded the Prime Minister's Mediterranean proposals as likely to cause more delay, if not indefinite postponement. They suspected that Mr. Churchill would welcome such postponement. They also now gave up their previous emphasis on plans to bring Turkey into the war. This change of policy was due, probably, to their realisation, after the discussions at the Moscow Conference, that Turkish belligerency—and the opening of the Straits—could be secured, if at all, only at a price of military and air assistance which might delay the date of the cross-Channel invasion. Moreover, they could not fail to see that, if the western Powers were occupied with the Germans in northwest Europe, the Russian armies would be able to advance into all the countries of southeast Europe (except Greece); for this reason they did not favour a proposal, made somewhat casually by the President, and supported by the Prime Minister, for an expedition to assist Marshal Tito.

Mr. Churchill has written<sup>2</sup> that he could have persuaded Stalin if Mr. Roosevelt had not been 'oppressed by the prejudices of his military advisers,' and had not 'drifted to and fro in the argument.' Whether, in fact, he would have succeeded must remain a matter of doubt, since Stalin knew what the American military authorities thought. Stalin had already spoken<sup>3</sup> of the entry of Russia into the war against Japan as soon as Germany had been defeated. This promise was now repeated formally. There were obvious motives of self-interest behind it, but it inclined the Americans to be more eager to discuss with Stalin Russian-American cooperation in the Far East than to argue questions of European strategy with the Prime Minister.

<sup>1</sup> This operation, which was connected strategically with a general plan for an offensive in Burma, would have to be undertaken mainly by British forces, and the diversion of ships and landing craft would have added to the difficulties of carrying out the Prime Minister's plans in the Mediterranean. The proposal was abandoned, but the President, the Prime Minister and General Chiang Kai-shek issued a declaration at Cairo on December 1 announcing their intention to deprive Japan of her empire. See also below, p. 569.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill, V, 305-6.

<sup>3</sup> At the Moscow Conference, in conversation with Mr. Hull.

Since the Americans and the Russians were united, the Prime Minister's attitude seemed almost obstructionist. On November 29 Stalin asked Mr. Churchill directly whether he and the British staff really 'believed in' the cross-Channel invasion. In order to make his case clear Mr. Churchill had a private conversation with Stalin on November 30,<sup>1</sup> in which he explained the British plans, and Stalin repeated his argument that the Soviet Army was counting on the success of the invasion. The Prime Minister's explanation had some effect on Stalin, but the Russians were able to draw from the conference two political conclusions, firstly, that, in the case of Anglo-American differences of view, the Prime Minister had ultimately to give way to the President, and, secondly, that the President was closer to his military than to his diplomatic advisers, and that the former did not take much account of, or always understand the political consequences of their own decisions. Furthermore the Russians could notice that the Americans were inclined to regard Stalin as a useful counterweight to the Prime Minister.<sup>2</sup>

## (iii)

*The questions of the Russo-Polish frontier and of the Russian attitude towards the Polish Government and Underground Movement: discussions on Poland at the Teheran Conference: British attempts to persuade the Polish Government to accept the Russian frontier demands (May–December, 1943).*

The Russians, after they had broken off diplomatic relations with the Poles, had said that they required changes in the Polish Government.<sup>3</sup> They did nothing to make it easier for General Sikorski to make any such changes in a direction friendly to the U.S.S.R. They announced the conscription of Poles in the U.S.S.R. for a Polish division which would form part of the Russian army—a measure which the Polish Government regarded, with good reason, as an infringement of their sovereign rights. Although they said that they were not preventing Polish subjects from leaving the U.S.S.R., they maintained their definition of Polish citizenship, and thus limited the numbers of those able to get away.

At the beginning of June, 1943, M. Maisky, in a conversation with Mr. R. A. Butler, said that we ought to come to an understanding with the Soviet Government on the frontier question because the Russians would advance to their 1941 frontiers and stay on them.

<sup>1</sup> For an account of this conversation, see Churchill, V, 332–6.

<sup>2</sup> See also, above, Introduction, p. xxxvii, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> See above, Chapter IX, section (iii).

The Foreign Office thought it inexpedient at this time to raise the matter, but tried to get American support for the immediate and practical problem of bringing out of Russia those Poles who wanted to leave. The American view was that we could not hope for success until we had settled the question of citizenship. No agreement for common action had been reached at the time of the death of General Sikorski.<sup>1</sup> The President of Poland then appointed the Deputy Prime Minister, M. Mikolajczyk,<sup>2</sup> as Prime Minister, and General Sosnkowski as Commander-in-Chief. The Foreign Office had doubts about the latter appointment, owing to General Sosnkowski's anti-Russian views, but there was no suitable alternative.

On August 11, after Anglo-American agreement on an approach to Stalin which would deal with the question of citizenship as well as that of evacuation, Sir A. Clark Kerr and Admiral Standley, the United States Ambassador, had an interview with Stalin and M. Molotov. The reception of their appeal was not encouraging. The Russians listened in silence. Stalin, who 'appeared to be glum,' said that he could not give an answer without further consideration of the two questions. If he were away at the front, he would send his reply through M. Molotov. Neither Stalin nor M. Molotov met the Ambassadors again for a discussion. M. Molotov communicated a formal reply on September 27 refusing any change of policy about citizenship, denying that there were any obstacles in the way of Polish citizens leaving the U.S.S.R., and maintaining that the relief organisations for the Poles were adequate. The note also repeated the allegation that the Polish Government had used the German charges about the Katyn massacres as a means of extorting territorial concessions from the Soviet Government.

In the middle of August, that is to say, before this bleak reply from M. Molotov had been received, the Foreign Office came to the conclusion that it might be necessary after all to take up the frontier question. Their view was that the Poles should recognise the Curzon line (with the inclusion of Lwow) as their eastern frontier, and should receive as compensation Danzig, East Prussia, and the Oppeln district of Upper Silesia. The Russians would also be allowed to absorb the Baltic States and retain their frontiers of 1941 with Finland and Roumania. The Foreign Office thought that President Roosevelt agreed with these proposals.<sup>3</sup> They therefore suggested a confidential Anglo-American assurance to Stalin that the two Governments would support a settlement on these lines at the Peace Conference. We

<sup>1</sup> General Sikorski was killed in an aeroplane accident on July 4, 1943, while returning from a visit to the Polish forces in the Middle East.

<sup>2</sup> M. Mikolajczyk was one of the leaders before 1939 of the so-called 'People's Party' (Peasant party) in Poland, and had favoured good relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 203.



should be acting contrary to the Atlantic Charter, but there was no other way of securing Anglo-Soviet collaboration after the war or getting an improvement in Polish-Soviet relations. We should have to tell the Polish Government of our views, and to advise them to base their policy on the assumption that we should support a solution at the Peace Conference in accordance with these views.

The Foreign Office suggested that Lord Halifax should be instructed to discuss the whole matter with President Roosevelt. No decision, however, was reached before or, indeed, at the Quebec Conference. Mr. Eden explained the British view to Mr. Hull. Mr. Hull thought that, if we were offering such large concessions to the Soviet Government, we should at least require something in return. We might say that our concessions on the frontier question would depend on the general agreement of the Soviet Government to our ideas of a post-war settlement.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Eden thought that the question could not be left without a decision. The proposed conference in Moscow might result in a deadlock if we could not shew the Russians that we did not intend to oppose their frontier claims at the Peace Conference. Mr. Eden suggested to the War Cabinet on October 5 that he should say at Moscow that, if the Poles accepted our proposals, we should expect the Soviet Government to resume relations with them, and to cooperate with them and with us in finding a satisfactory solution to questions concerning Polish Underground Resistance, and to the problem created by the Russian support of a rival Polish army and parties in the U.S.S.R. hostile to the Polish Government. Mr. Eden pointed out that the questions concerning the Underground Movement were urgent, since, with the advance of the Russian armies, fighting might break out between the Polish guerrillas and the Russians in eastern Poland.<sup>2</sup> Moreover the Poles were asking us to supply arms to their Underground forces. If we did so without consulting the Russians, they would say that we were equipping a force to be used against them. There was little doubt that the Poles would resist Russian encroachment on the pre-1939 frontiers of Poland. On the other hand the Underground army—for the Poles, their main army—might

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<sup>1</sup> From Mr. Hopkins' conversation, it appeared not only that the President himself accepted the British view, but that he had said as much to MM. Litvinov and Molotov.

<sup>2</sup> The Poles had organised both an underground army—known as the Home Army—and an apparatus of government and administration. The organisation, which was supported by the four principal Polish parties (none of which was communist) was in close contact with the Government in London. If, therefore, the Russians wanted to impose upon Poland a puppet government of their choice, they would have to do much more than disown the Government in London. Hence their plan was, while taking temporary advantage of the anti-German activities of the Home Army, to weaken its organisation and to build up rival military forces—open and underground—and a rival political organisation of communist 'partisans'. It does not seem clear, from the British documents, whether Mr. Churchill at this time fully realised the significance of the Russian attitude towards the non-communist Underground organisation.

take a decisive part, if fully equipped, in the liberation of Poland and the subsequent maintenance of order.

Before the War Cabinet discussed Mr. Eden's proposals, Count Raczynski brought to the Foreign Office a statement on Polish policy. The Polish Government were now afraid that they might have the Russians in Polish territory before they had safeguarded their fellow-countrymen from a repetition of the treatment which they had received in 1939. The note affirmed the Polish determination to stand by the integrity of the eastern territories of Poland. The Polish Government did not want even a temporary and partial occupation of Poland by Russian forces; if such an occupation were necessary, it must be preceded by a Russo-Polish agreement which would allow the Polish sovereign authority and its agents to take over the administration of the country. Count Raczynski said to Mr. Eden that the Polish Government were afraid that the Russians would set up in Poland a puppet communist State, possibly as a constituent part of the U.S.S.R. If they had such a plan, the surrender of territory would not stop them from carrying it out. Hence the Poles regarded the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations as a test of Russian intentions.

The War Cabinet accepted Mr. Eden's proposals, but in view of the refusal of the Poles to agree to a discussion of the frontier question at Moscow, and of the American unwillingness to consider territorial frontiers until the end of the war, no progress was made at the Conference towards a settlement. The subject was discussed only once, and at the end of the Conference. Mr. Eden and Mr. Hull said they hoped for a resumption of Russo-Polish diplomatic relations. Mr. Eden asked about sending arms to the Underground Movement; M. Molotov said that arms should be given only to 'safe hands.'

After Mr. Eden's return to London from Moscow, M. Mikolajczyk at first continued to refuse to discuss territorial concessions, but on November 17 Count Raczynski brought a memorandum to the Foreign Office in which the Polish Government spoke of the urgency of safeguarding the rights of the Polish Government to assume the administration of the country as soon as it was liberated from the Germans, and asked for the Prime Minister's intervention with Stalin.<sup>1</sup> Count Raczynski explained that the memorandum was not M. Mikolajczyk's 'last word.' The Polish Government could not suggest concessions affecting the future of the Polish State while they were in exile and without the support of the Polish Parliament; the position would be different if the friends of Poland were to tell her that she must accept such and such a settlement in order to safeguard

<sup>1</sup> M. Mikolajczyk wanted to go to the Middle East in order to put the Polish case to the Prime Minister before he left for Teheran. Mr. Eden told him that a mission of this kind would be misinterpreted either as an Anglo-Polish attempt to put pressure on the Russians or as an attempt by M. Mikolajczyk to prevent Mr. Churchill from sacrificing the interests of Poland.

the future of the country. This settlement would have to be guaranteed by Great Britain and the United States.

Mr. Eden explained to the Poles that it might be possible at the Teheran Conference to try to break the deadlock with the Russians. He did not ask for the permission of the Polish Government to raise the frontier question; he asked merely that they should not refuse to agree to any mention of it. M. Mikolajczyk accepted this position, but wished any discussion about frontiers to include Polish claims in the west. He also wanted the Polish Government to be given a chance of expressing their views after consulting their Underground Movement.

The Prime Minister raised the Polish question at the opening of the Teheran Conference. He suggested that the three Heads of Governments might agree upon a frontier arrangement which we would advise the Poles to accept. Later, on December 1, President Roosevelt said that he hoped for a resumption of diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and Poland. The Prime Minister asked Stalin for the Russian views on the frontier question. Stalin had already suggested informally that the western frontier of Poland might be moved to the Oder. He now repeated that Russia favoured a Polish advance at the expense of Germany. His statement that Russia wanted the territory recovered in 1939 produced an argument whether the line of partition in 1939 was, in fact, the Curzon line, and whether the latter had or had not included Lwow in the Polish State.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Roosevelt asked whether East Prussia and the territory east of the Oder approximated in size to the eastern provinces of Poland. Stalin said that he did not know. Mr. Churchill considered that the value of the land to be assigned to Poland was much greater than that of the Pripet marshes, and that the Poles would be foolish not to accept the offer.<sup>2</sup> Finally, on December 1, when the frontier question again came under discussion (in connexion with the future of Germany),<sup>3</sup> Mr. Churchill said that he was not asking for any agreement, and was not himself convinced in the matter, but that it would be desirable to draw up some formula. He suggested words to the effect that 'it was thought in principle that the home of the Polish State and nation should be between the so-called Curzon line and the line of the Oder, including for Poland East Prussia and Oppeln, but the actual line required

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden suggested that the Curzon line was intended to run east of Lwow, but Stalin said that he could produce a Russian map shewing that the line ran west of Lwow. See above, p. 201, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin said that the question of Soviet relations with the Polish Government in exile was different from that of the security of the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. He would be glad to renew relations with the Poles if they would give up killing Partisans and fight the Germans.

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 447-8.

careful study and possibly the disentanglement of population at some points.' Stalin said that the Russians wanted Königsberg, but otherwise would accept the Prime Minister's formula. The Prime Minister asked about Lwow; Stalin merely repeated that he would accept the Curzon line.

On his return to London from the Teheran Conference Mr. Eden found the Poles even more concerned about what was to happen when the Russians entered Poland. Mr. Eden mentioned Stalin's charge that the Poles were not fighting the Germans, but were killing the 'partisans.' Count Raczynski explained that owing to severe German reprisals the Poles had latterly restricted themselves to action against the worst members of the Gestapo, and had not conducted indiscriminate war against all Germans in Poland. On the other hand the Russians had sent a number of agents all over Poland; the activities of these agents had brought reprisals on the Polish population. Obviously there was some feeling against the Russian 'partisans.' Count Raczynski also gave the Foreign Office documents shewing why the Polish Government so much feared what the Russian authorities would do when they came into Poland. The documents described the attempts already being made to undermine popular confidence in the Polish Underground Movement. There was evidence that the Soviet agents betrayed Poles to the Gestapo, and that they carried out depredations against the Polish population, especially the larger landowners and more prosperous peasants, and had murdered a number of soldiers and members of the Underground Movement. In eastern Poland they worked for union with the U.S.S.R. and in western Poland they alleged that the British and Americans were selfish imperialists caring nothing for Polish interests.

The Foreign Office considered that the few independent reports which they had received confirmed the Polish charges, but that all we could do was to try to emphasise the Polish resistance to the Germans and their readiness to cooperate with the Russians. M. Mikolajczyk, in an interview with Mr. Eden on December 20, said that he was prepared to answer Stalin's accusations, but that it was wholly unnecessary to make a statement—as Mr. Eden had suggested—that the Poles had not cooperated with the Germans. Mr. Eden then proposed that the statement should be put positively—that it should mention all that the Poles had done against Germany. M. Mikolajczyk did not like the frontier proposals. He objected that the Curzon line gave both Lwow and Vilna to Russia and that the compensations promised in the west did not justify such a surrender.

Mr. Eden asked the Polish Ministers to think over the matter. They came back to see him on December 24. After this second interview

Mr. Eden telegraphed to the Prime Minister that it was difficult to make the Polish Ministers understand 'realities' with regard to the Russian frontier claims. M. Mikolajczyk did not want large areas of German territory which a weakened Poland could not easily absorb.<sup>1</sup> On December 30 Count Raczynski brought to the Foreign Office an *aide-mémoire* about Polish resistance, with a request that the Soviet Government would agree to discuss military and political co-operation in the war against Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister had telegraphed to Mr. Eden on December 20 that the Poles should be advised to accept the offer of what he described as a 'magnificent piece of country,' even if they had to give up Lwow. If they refused the offer, it was difficult to see how we could press the Russians for anything more for them. Mr. Eden told the Prime Minister that he was not mentioning to the Poles the Russian demand for Königsberg, since he hoped that, if the Poles agreed to accept the Curzon line, we might try to persuade the Russians to give up this additional demand.

## CHAPTER XIII

Great Britain, the United States, and General de Gaulle from August, 1943 to July, 1945: the recognition of the French National Committee as the Provisional Government of France: the affairs of Syria and the Lebanon, 1943-5: visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Paris in November, 1944; the question of an Anglo-French treaty

### (i)

*The situation in Syria and Lebanon in 1943: differences between the views of the Foreign Office and those of the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt over the actions of the French National Committee in North Africa.*

THE recognition of the 'new' French Committee of National Liberation in August, 1943, did not make the Prime Minister less suspicious or the President and the State Department less prejudiced—no kinder word can apply—with regard to General de Gaulle. Since General de Gaulle himself remained both abrupt and rigid—again no kinder words apply—the Secretary of State still had to argue the cause of the French with Mr. Churchill and the President, and to do so without much French help.

Syria and the Lebanon to an extent far beyond their intrinsic importance continued to trouble Anglo-French relations. From the early months of 1943 these States were no longer in serious danger of German invasion. The inference drawn by the Syrians and Lebanese was that there was now no military reason against the transfer of power to themselves. The long-deferred elections were held in Syria in July, 1943, and in the Lebanon at the end of August. In each State the nationalists won a large majority. The nationalist politicians took for granted the defeat of Germany in Europe, and therefore assumed the recovery of France to be only a matter of time. From their point of view the nationalists were afraid that this recovery would bring a re-assertion of former French rights and privileges; General de Gaulle and the French administration had indeed given the Syrians and Lebanese good cause to take this view. Hence the two Governments wanted to safeguard themselves by securing at once the full attributes of sovereignty. The French, on the other hand, refused further concessions until they had obtained treaties reaffirming in the new conditions their former preeminence. The two States would not



consider any treaties until they could negotiate from a position of complete independence. Unfortunately General de Gaulle still refused to see that Syrian and Lebanese goodwill would be won, if at all, only by timely concession and friendliness. He remained more nervous of British encroachment upon French influence than he was careful about winning the support of local opinion. Early in July, 1943, and before the elections, Sir E. Spears had sent to the Prime Minister a long and unfavourable report about the French attitude. The Foreign Office commented upon this report that, while the description of what the French were doing was true, Sir E. Spears himself was not making matters better since, in spite of repeated instructions, he was mistaken in his view of British policy.

In November, 1943, the Lebanese Government introduced constitutional changes which greatly reduced French authority and influence. The French then arrested the President of the Lebanese Republic and all the Ministers whom they could find. The British Government protested strongly at this action, and insisted on the release of the Ministers and their 'automatic' reinstatement as the legitimate government. The French National Committee—apparently against General de Gaulle's wish—gave way. The British view was that, although the French should not have taken such high-handed measures, the Lebanese Ministers had been unreasonable in their unilateral abrogation of French privileges. Once the immediate crisis was over, both the French authorities and the Syrian and Lebanese politicians showed more moderation, and before the end of the year General Catroux negotiated with the two Governments over one of the main grievances—the retention in French hands of the Funds of Common Interest.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister was unwilling to accept the Foreign Office view that Anglo-French relations in the Levant would go more smoothly if there were a change in the British representation. He also disagreed with the Foreign Office over other measures taken by General de Gaulle which were of immediate consequence for the prosecution of the war. In November, 1943, the French Committee announced a number of changes in its composition. The purpose of these changes was twofold: the Committee wanted to admit representatives of the principal French political parties and the Resistance Movement, and to separate, in their own words, 'the political power from the military command.' The most important feature of the latter plan was that Generals Giraud and Georges would no longer be members of the Committee, and that, although General Giraud remained Commander-in-Chief, he would cease to be a co-President of the Committee.

The Foreign Office did not think these changes unreasonable, but expected them to alarm Mr. Roosevelt and the State Department.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 122, note 2.

The first signs of alarm, however, came from the Prime Minister. Mr. Churchill telegraphed to the President that the two Governments should retain an attitude of reserve until he and Mr. Roosevelt had been able to discuss the position. Mr. Eden, however, explained to the Prime Minister that with the changes the Committee was in fact more representative of French opinion, and that the new members would have more control of General de Gaulle.

Although the Prime Minister accepted this view, his suspicions of General de Gaulle came out again when, on December 21, the Committee announced the arrest of MM. Boisson, Peyrouton, and Flandin. These arrests were part of a 'purge' which had already included M. Pucheu.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill was at this time at Carthage recovering from an attack of pneumonia; he telegraphed indignantly to Mr. Eden about the arrests. He said that the surrender of Dakar was due to M. Boisson, and that M. Peyrouton had been invited to North Africa by General Giraud with American approval. We had no obligation to M. Flandin, but he had succeeded in preventing Laval from bringing about an alliance with Germany and from authorising an expedition from Dakar to the Lake Chad area. The Prime Minister also telegraphed to the President that he was shocked at the arrests, and hoped that he (the President) would point out to the French Committee the unwisdom of their action.

The Foreign Office agreed that we had a certain responsibility for the acts of the Committee, since whatever its members might say, they would be returning to France under the shelter of our armies. On the other hand we had not the slightest obligation to M. Pucheu, and M. Flandin had not done anything to prevent an expedition to Lake Chad. He did not become Foreign Minister until Laval's dismissal in December, 1940, and held this post only until February, 1941. During this time he appeared to have concerned himself solely with Franco-German economic collaboration. MM. Peyrouton and Boisson had tried at any rate to 'work their passage.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Pucheu, an industrialist, and a member of the so-called 'Worms group' (i.e. a group associated with the French bank of that name), had been Vichy Minister of the Interior in 1941. He was generally hated in France owing to the savage methods by which he suppressed opposition. According to evidence produced by the Gaullists at his trial, he had told Marshal Pétain as late as October, 1942, that French interests required a compromise peace, and not the defeat of Germany. General Giraud had allowed M. Pucheu to come to North Africa in May, 1943, on condition that he joined a French fighting unit. M. Pucheu, with other persons accused, was tried by a special military tribunal set up in January, 1944. He was found guilty and executed on March 20.

<sup>2</sup> Later Foreign Office minutes pointed out that M. Boisson had not assisted the Allies to secure Dakar. He did not come over to the Allies until a fortnight after French opposition to the Allied forces had ceased in Africa. He then declared his allegiance to Admiral Darlan after satisfying himself that the latter was acting with Marshal Pétain's approval. M. Boisson had in fact no alternative, since French West Africa was completely isolated from France. He still maintained his allegiance to Marshal Pétain. Before November, 1942, he had permitted the ill-treatment not only of Gaullists in French West Africa but also of British subjects—mostly merchant seamen—interned in the territory under his control. Some of these internees had died as the result of neglect and ill-treatment.

Mr. Eden asked Mr. Macmillan to put the Prime Minister's views to M. Massigli.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Macmillan had already seen M. Massigli, and had been told by him that the trials of MM. Flandin, Boisson, and Peyrouton would be adjourned until after the liberation of France, and that the pressure on the Committee to make the arrests had come from Resistance as well as Gaullist sources. Mr. Macmillan thought that we could obtain official assurances from the Committee through ordinary diplomatic channels and that there was no need for any dramatic presentation of notes. Mr. Roosevelt, however, had sent General Eisenhower a note instructing him to tell the Committee that they must not take any action against the three men. The Prime Minister agreed with this note, and telegraphed his hope that the War Cabinet would support it. He did not regard Mr. Macmillan's proposal for assurances through diplomatic channels as satisfactory.

The Foreign Office not only disagreed with the Prime Minister's view of the record of the three men, but regarded the instructions to General Eisenhower as likely to result in the resignation of the French Committee. We should then have no alternative to an administration headed by Generals Giraud and Georges and based on such support as they could get from the army. The effect on French morale would be disastrous. Further cooperation with the Resistance groups would probably be impossible, and there would be a risk of civil war in France after the liberation.

Mr. Eden put these considerations to the Prime Minister. He pointed out that General de Gaulle could have arrested the three men months earlier. The fact that he had not done so until the Resistance leaders joined the Committee showed that they, and not General de Gaulle himself, were primarily responsible for the 'purge.' Meanwhile Mr. Wilson, United States diplomatic representative in North Africa, had telegraphed to the President that he agreed with Mr. Macmillan's proposal. The President therefore sent new instructions which allowed General Eisenhower not to present any note if he could get satisfactory assurances in informal discussion. These assurances were given, and the President and Prime Minister accepted them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Massigli, who had come from France to join the Fighting French, succeeded M. Pleven as Commissioner for Foreign Affairs in February, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> General de Gaulle, when visiting the Prime Minister at Marrakesh on January 14, 1944, showed him a report of a debate in the French Consultative Assembly during which there had been a unanimous demand for more severe penalties against collaborators. General de Gaulle said that he had set up the Assembly (September, 1943) in accordance with his democratic policy, and that he must listen to its demands. He assured the Prime Minister that the three men would not be tried until after the liberation of France.

## (ii)

*Refusal of President Roosevelt to allow the conclusion of a civil affairs agreement with the French National Committee before the Allied landings in France.*

The distrust of General de Gaulle and of the French Committee felt by the President and the Prime Minister was a matter of more serious difficulty in holding up decisions of great political importance. The Allies were now hoping to liberate France. They assumed that, as soon as was practicable after the expulsion of the Germans, the French people would be given an opportunity to choose their own government and to settle the constitutional régime under which such a government would function. This choice, however, could not be made at once. No one could foresee how long the Germans would hold out in France. After they had been driven out there would be a period of administrative confusion during which the essential need would be to maintain order and to secure the efficient working of the communications and other services of the Allied armies on their advance into Germany. The deep political cleavage between Left and Right, which had been one of the causes of French weakness before the war, was now even more dangerous. The parties of the Right were associated with the defeatism and collaboration of the Vichy régime; the supporters of the Resistance Movements came mainly, though not entirely, from the Left and included, in France as elsewhere, a well organised and much advertised communist element whose aim was to secure power after the withdrawal of the Germans. Hence the establishment of a strong provisional authority was necessary in order to prevent the inevitable outburst of popular feeling from developing into a civil war after the liberation of the country.

The British military authorities did not appear, at first, to the Foreign Office to realise the political importance of the problem; they looked at it primarily from the point of view of military convenience, and envisaged, for the first six months after the liberation, the establishment of an Allied Military Government in France on lines similar to those adopted in Italy, with a military administration staffed by British and American Civil Affairs officers. The Foreign Office pointed out the bad effects which any such plan would have on French opinion; M. Viénot<sup>1</sup> commented to Mr. Eden that the French people, after their liberation from the Germans, would not understand why they had to go on living under a foreign régime, even

<sup>1</sup> M. Viénot was appointed Diplomatic Representative of the French National Committee in London on October 8, 1943.

though it was an Allied régime.<sup>1</sup> In any case, if, as they hoped, the Allies made a rapid military advance, they would not have sufficient resources to administer the civil affairs of France. The Foreign Office had, in fact, already sent a draft plan to Washington providing that the Allied Commander-in-Chief should assume responsibility for the civil administration only until such control had ceased to be necessary on military grounds. The transfer of responsibility to a provisional French authority would take place as soon as possible.

The French National Committee had given to the British and Americans on September 9, 1943, a draft of their own proposals that outside the zones of active operations the administration should be left to French officials under a delegate of the Committee. The Americans on the other hand suggested the continuance of something like Allied Military Government until the French people had decided by a plebiscite their own future form of government. The Foreign Office therefore had to try to convince the French that there must be a temporary period in which the Commander-in-Chief retained full authority, and to persuade the Americans that this period must be short.

During the last three months of 1943 little progress was made towards the solution of these questions because the President did not want to settle them by negotiation with the French Committee. At the beginning of December the State Department had come round to the British view that we should have to negotiate a civil affairs agreement with the Committee as we had negotiated agreements with the Belgian, Dutch, and Norwegian Governments. The President, however, refused to do anything which had the appearance of giving more recognition to the Committee. The Foreign Office hoped that the Prime Minister would have tried to convince the President at the Teheran Conference, but the Prime Minister found no opportunity for doing so, and indeed inclined out of distrust of General de Gaulle to support Mr. Roosevelt. Thus a curious situation arose in which the State Department and the Foreign Office were near to an agreement which the two 'principals' were unwilling to accept.

On January 6, 1944, the French Committee asked that the two Governments should send a reply to the French proposals made four months earlier. The Foreign Office was not surprised that the Committee was showing impatience. There was some hope of agreement when the State Department stated on January 8 that the United States Government had 'no intention of having any dealings or relations with the Vichy régime except for the purpose of abolishing it.'

<sup>1</sup> The French had received from an American source a garbled version of the military proposals. The Foreign Office complained very strongly to the American military authorities of this unauthorised and inaccurate communication.

The hopes of the Foreign Office increased for a time when they received a revised American draft proposing that the Committee, as the only body capable of taking over the civil administration of France, should be responsible for the restoration of full representative government. Unfortunately the President would not accept this provision. The Prime Minister supported his opposition, or at all events was not willing to try to remove it. The Foreign Office agreed with the Prime Minister that we could not know in advance the wishes of the French people, but they thought that we had an obligation to bring the Committee and Consultative Assembly back to France as well as an interest in recognising them as an authority capable of establishing an administration. The next stage would be the endorsement of this provisional authority and administration by the French people in the liberated areas and the establishment of an assembly of some kind to control it until the holding of a general election. Our responsibility would end after we had brought the Committee into France, and given them the opportunity to discuss arrangements with their fellow countrymen.

At the end of February, 1944, the State Department was still unable to convince Mr. Roosevelt that in the first two stages—i.e. consultation about arrangements, and setting up an administration—there was no alternative to working with the Committee, while the Foreign Office still found the Prime Minister unwilling to hurry or 'over-persuade' the President. On March 3 the Foreign Office heard from Lord Halifax that the President had written his own 'directive' on civil affairs in France, and had gone back on the proposal to deal with the National Committee, and that the State Department considered some of the passages in the directive 'definitely insulting' to the French. Once again the Prime Minister supported Mr. Roosevelt, and the Foreign Office repeated to the Prime Minister their view that we ought to enable the Committee to get into touch with the local leaders in the liberated areas and then leave the French to make their provisional arrangements for themselves. The Prime Minister was afraid that the Committee might carry out more 'purges' of the kind against which he had protested so strongly; the Foreign Office argued that there was less risk of violence if the French people saw that there was a French authority capable of dealing with French traitors by legal means. The Prime Minister again said that there was no need for haste. We might well find ourselves occupying no more than a bridgehead in France, and would have ample time to decide our policy after we had seen how the French Committee were behaving. Mr. Eden's answer was that we ought to have arrangements ready for the possibility of a rapid advance, and that General Eisenhower wanted to take up the planning of civil affairs with the only French authorities now available.



These discussions continued throughout April, 1944,<sup>1</sup> and indeed became even more confused because Mr. Hull gave a broadcast on April 9 which went beyond—though in somewhat grudging terms—the President's own directive. The main objections of the Foreign Office to the directive were that the President, in instructing General Eisenhower, had used the terms 'may consult' with the French Committee, and 'may' authorise them to select and install the personnel necessary for civil administration, but that General Eisenhower was not limited to dealing only with the Committee. Mr. Hull, on the other hand, stated that the United States Government were disposed to see the French Committee 'exercise the leadership to establish law and order under the supervision, while the military exigency lasts, of the Allied Commander-in-Chief.' The Committee had given assurances that it wished the French people to exercise their own sovereign will as early as possible. The Committee was not the Government of France and the United States could not recognise it as such, but it would be given 'every opportunity to restore civil administration.'

The Foreign Office now hoped that Mr. Roosevelt would modify his directive in order to bring it into harmony with Mr. Hull's broadcast. The President was unwilling to make any change, and the Prime Minister, as earlier, was unwilling to disturb his relations with the President over what he called 'small points.' Meanwhile, on April 19, with General Eisenhower's approval, General Bedell Smith had invited General Koenig<sup>2</sup> to an informal talk, and had explained to him that, although for the time all questions would have to be dealt with on a military basis, he realised that the French Military Mission would require advice from French civil experts and that the French Committee had appointed a delegate with responsibility for civil affairs.

The Foreign Office thought that the best plan might now be not to send any general directive to General Eisenhower, but to follow up General Bedell Smith's informal conversation with an invitation to the Committee to discuss matters with S.H.A.E.F. through General Koenig's mission. The Americans might be persuaded to include in this invitation a reference to the French Committee taking the lead in the reorganisation of civil administration. We should thus begin with an agreement between S.H.A.E.F. and the French delegation

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<sup>1</sup> At this time the Prime Minister and the President considered that they had another example of General de Gaulle's indifference to their wishes in the cancellation of the appointment of General Giraud as Commander-in-Chief. General de Gaulle's motive may have been partly that he wanted to obtain complete control of the Resistance Movement in France, where one important military group was in touch with General Giraud. In any case the British and United States military authorities regarded the latter's resignation as desirable in the interests of the efficiency of the French army.

<sup>2</sup> General Koenig was appointed in February, 1944, by the French National Committee to the command of the French forces of the Interior (the united armed forces of the Resistance Movement). In April he was designated also French Military Delegate in London and chief military liaison officer with General Eisenhower for purposes connected with operations based on the United Kingdom.



and get the Americans later on to give it a more formal character. The President, however, intervened again with instructions to General Eisenhower that all arrangements with the French Committee were to be tentative until an agreement had been reached on a 'civil affairs formula,' and that it should be made clear to the Committee that the arrangements with them 'do not preclude consultation with and assistance from other elements of the French people with whom you (i.e. General Eisenhower) may feel it necessary or advantageous to deal while your forces are in France.'

This revised draft was communicated to the Foreign Office on May 5. The Foreign Office described it as wholly unacceptable. The Prime Minister, however, was not willing to quarrel with the President over the matter, and still thought that General de Gaulle's policy, if he came into power, would be most unfriendly to Great Britain and the United States. On the other hand the Prime Minister accepted a suggestion made on May 8 by Mr. Duff Cooper,<sup>1</sup> with the support of the Foreign Office, that, if we could first reach agreement about the instructions to General Eisenhower, we should invite General de Gaulle to London.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President that he proposed to invite General de Gaulle and one or two members of his Committee to come to London for secret discussions.<sup>3</sup> He asked whether the President would allow General Eisenhower to represent him at these discussions (which should cover outstanding questions of military and political collaboration) or whether he would send over a special representative.

The President did not object to the invitation to General de Gaulle but was unwilling to allow General Eisenhower to become involved with the French Committee on a 'political level'; he repeated also that he was unable to recognise any government of France until the people of France had had a free choice in the matter. The fact that the French Consultative Assembly had recommended that the National Committee should take the title of Provisional Government was unlikely to make the President more forthcoming, though the Foreign Office considered that we might well recognise the change of title, and that there were advantages in accepting from the French their own description of themselves as provisional.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Duff Cooper had been appointed on January 1, 1944, British Representative with the French Committee of National Liberation. He was given the personal rank of Ambassador.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Halifax reported on May 4 that Mr. Hull had spoken to him very strongly about the President's hostility to General de Gaulle.

<sup>3</sup> Owing to the secrecy arrangements in connexion with D-day, the representatives of the French Committee in London could not communicate in code with General de Gaulle and the Committee in Algiers, and any representatives coming from Algiers to London would have to stay in London until after D-day.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Eden pointed out to the War Cabinet that the question of recognising the new title would not arise until the Committee sent a formal notification to the British Government. This notification was not received until June 9.

## (iii)

*Discussions with General de Gaulle before D-Day: recognition of the French National Committee as the Provisional Government of France, October 23, 1944.*

The Combined Chiefs of Staff did not want to invite General de Gaulle until 'D-Day.' The Prime Minister therefore sent him a message, which was delivered on May 23, inviting him to London without mentioning a definite date. The Prime Minister also telegraphed again to the President asking him 'earnestly' to send over someone of the rank of Mr. Stettinius to express his point of view. Mr. Churchill repeated that there was 'strong sentiment in England in favour of France,' and that no one could understand the French 'being cold-shouldered.'

General de Gaulle was doubtful, up to the last moment, whether he should come to London without receiving assurances that he would be negotiating with the Americans as well as the British; he was afraid that otherwise any settlement reached in London might be delayed indefinitely owing to a reference to Washington. Finally, however, he agreed to come without any conditions. He reached London on June 3.<sup>1</sup>

The position now was slightly absurd. Although there had been satisfactory informal discussions between the Allied military authorities and General Koenig, the obstinacy of the President had prevented the conclusion of a formal agreement, at the highest level, about the civil administration of the country which the Anglo-American armies were hoping to liberate. Unfortunately General de Gaulle did not seem to realise the strength of his own position. British and American forces were about to undertake a most hazardous and costly operation. If this operation succeeded there could be no doubt that the French Committee of Liberation would obtain control of the civil administration of France, and would become in fact the provisional government which they had now called themselves. General de Gaulle, having waited with remarkable tenacity and courage for four years, had now to wait only a few weeks or even days. Nevertheless he kept to his demand for an American signature, and, in so doing, gave the impression that he was haggling over unimportant formulae and matters of prestige, and hampering the efforts of two great nations to give back to France the liberties which she could not recover without their help.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw General de Gaulle on

<sup>1</sup> A message from the Prime Minister inviting him to come at once was given to General de Gaulle on June 2. He came alone, since he said that it would be useless to bring members of his Government if the Americans were not taking part in the negotiations.

June 4. The Prime Minister explained that he had wanted to tell General de Gaulle in person of the forthcoming operation. He wanted also to discuss the administration of liberated France. The President had refused to agree to conversations on political matters between representatives of the three countries, but Mr. Churchill was sure that if he—General de Gaulle—suggested that he should go to Washington, the President would receive him.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden added that in this case we might hold preliminary discussions in London at which Mr. Winant could be present. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden argued again at lunch with General de Gaulle on June 4<sup>2</sup> in favour of opening discussions on the question of administration and explained that they had failed to persuade the President to make a change in his directive, but that Mr. Hull's speech had been much more favourable to the Committee. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden then took General de Gaulle to see General Eisenhower. General de Gaulle agreed that the Resistance groups in France should take their instructions from General Eisenhower through General Koenig. He also agreed to deliver a broadcast early on D-day immediately after General Eisenhower, but he was still unwilling to discuss civil affairs without American participation. The Foreign Office thought that he believed his invitation to London to be a trap with the object of giving the impression to the French people that he and his Committee were in agreement with the British and United States Governments.

In the afternoon of June 5 General de Gaulle said that he wished to withdraw the French liaison officers attached to the Allied forces, since there was no agreement about their duties.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Eden asked

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<sup>1</sup> The President had told the Prime Minister somewhat grudgingly on April 8, that he would see General de Gaulle if he wished to come to Washington. The Prime Minister, through Mr. Duff Cooper, let General de Gaulle know of this message. On April 15 the President again said that he was willing to receive General de Gaulle, but would not take the initiative in sending him an invitation. General de Gaulle was willing to follow the Prime Minister's suggestion that he—the Prime Minister—should ensure that an answer to an enquiry about a visit would be favourable. On April 21, however, the President telegraphed that, owing to pressure of work, he would rather not have such an enquiry for another month. Mr. Churchill replied that he had hoped that the President would 'go a little further than this.' He pointed out the assistance which General de Gaulle had given us. The President replied on April 24 that he had no information that General de Gaulle and his Committee had as yet given any helpful assistance to the Allied war effort. He was willing to receive a request from General de Gaulle towards the end of May, but he would not have it said that he had invited him to Washington. In view of this answer the Prime Minister decided that for the time he could do nothing more.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bevin, whom the Prime Minister had asked to meet General de Gaulle, also tried to persuade him to begin discussions. Mr. Bevin told General de Gaulle that the Labour Party would resent his refusal.

<sup>3</sup> There was a certain confusion because the Foreign Office had thought that General de Gaulle was also refusing to give his broadcast. In fact, he had said that, owing to the omission of any reference to himself or to the French Committee in the text of General Eisenhower's broadcast, he did not want to speak immediately after General Eisenhower, but that he would broadcast later in the day. The Prime Minister remained under the impression (and told the President) that General de Gaulle had agreed to give his broadcast only after severe pressure from Mr. Eden.

M. Viénot at 10.30 p.m. to try to persuade General de Gaulle to change his mind. Mr. Eden pointed out that the question had been fully discussed between representatives of S.H.A.E.F. and General Koenig and that General de Gaulle ought to send the officers under the arrangements already made and then discuss civil affairs with us in order to supplement their instructions. M. Viénot came back at 1 a.m. on June 6 to see Mr. Eden. Mr. Eden was with the Prime Minister, and M. Viénot had to say to them that General de Gaulle would not change his mind about the liaison officers. The Prime Minister then spoke very strongly about his lack of confidence in General de Gaulle.

Mr. Duff Cooper persuaded General de Gaulle on June 6 to agree to send at least some of the officers. He spoke of the bad effect on public opinion of General de Gaulle's refusal, and said that he could limit the powers of the officers until he had reached an agreement about civil affairs. General de Gaulle answered that he wanted to establish good long-term relations with Great Britain, but could not do so at the present time unless the Americans joined in the discussions, since they would have the last word in the immediate future of France.

Mr. Eden now wrote a minute to the Prime Minister that we could not any longer evade the question of a civil affairs agreement; the question of currency, for example, was of immediate importance.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden asked whether the Prime Minister would send another message to the President asking him to allow Mr. Winant to take part in discussions with General de Gaulle and members of his Committee. The Prime Minister sent a message on June 8, though in terms which showed his anger at General de Gaulle.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, after another discussion with General de Gaulle, the Foreign Office gave to M. Viénot on June 8 a formal note summarising our proposals for discussion, and stating that we were willing to bring to London any members of the Committee whom General de Gaulle would wish to include in the discussions, and that we would invite the President to send a representative or allow Mr. Winant to take part in them. We would recommend to the United States Government any agreement which might be reached.

General de Gaulle gave way on June 9 to the extent of allowing

<sup>1</sup> This question had already caused trouble. In the case of Allied countries with recognised governments an arrangement had been made whereby the latter provided new currency notes for the use of the liberating forces. The British Government were prepared to allow the French Committee to issue notes for France, but the Americans—following the wishes of the President—refused. The British Government had therefore to agree to the printing of special notes in the United States. The President was unwilling to allow the words 'République française' to appear on the notes. General Eisenhower would have to proclaim the notes as legal tender, though the British Government hoped to cover this action by a supporting proclamation from the French Committee. General de Gaulle wanted the notes to be replaced as soon as possible by a currency issued under the authority of the Committee.

<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that the Prime Minister was writing at the most critical and anxious time in the later stages of the war, and after a prolonged period of very great strain.

M. Viénot to open discussions at an official level. The Foreign Office, indeed, thought that there were advantages in conducting the discussions through officials, and submitting the agreements thus reached to the two Governments. The discussions began on June 19; no American representatives were present at them, but the basis of negotiations was a draft drawn up by the Foreign Office in co-operation with American and British officers of S.H.A.E.F. The situation also became easier because the attitude of the French people in the areas already liberated was clear from the reception given to General de Gaulle on a short visit to Normandy on June 14. As the Foreign Office had expected, there was no practical alternative to the policy of dealing solely with the Committee. The Prime Minister put the facts in his own way to Mr. Roosevelt on June 20; he said that General de Gaulle and the Committee represented most 'of the elements who want to help us. Vichy is a foe, and there is a large, middle body who only wish to be left alone and eat good meals from day to day. The energizing factor of General de Gaulle must not be forgotten in our treatment of the French problem.'

On July 2 the documents agreed with M. Viénot were given to Mr. Winant for transmission to Washington. No reply was received for some time, and the President apparently did not discuss any matters of controversy in detail with General de Gaulle on the latter's visit to the United States.<sup>1</sup> On July 10 the President telegraphed his general acceptance of the draft agreement, and in spite of a good deal of discussion over details, there was now little doubt of a final settlement. The agreement was signed—in identical texts—in Washington and London on August 25. Although the President, for no good reason, still refused to concede to the Committee the title 'Provisional Government', this final concession would soon have to be made.

The Foreign Office indeed wanted to recognise this title before events compelled us to do so, but once more the Prime Minister thought it better to wait. In mid-August the Foreign Office suggested that the liberation of Paris would be a good time for accepting the new title, and giving up the fiction that there was no French Government. We need not even make any formal act of recognition. All we had to do was to find some graceful means of dropping the old title and using the new one. The Prime Minister, however, argued that, if we secured the liberation of the west and south of France, including Paris, there would be a large area from which a 'real' provisional government might be drawn, instead of a government composed entirely of the French Committee whose interest in seizing 'the title-deeds of France' was obvious.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General de Gaulle arrived in the United States on July 6 and left on July 11. The President told Mr. Churchill that the visit had gone off 'very well.'

<sup>2</sup> General de Gaulle had not made matters easier by refusing to see the Prime Minister during the latter's short stay in Algiers on his way to Rome.

Mr. Eden made another attempt to persuade the Prime Minister early in September, but Mr. Churchill would not agree to any change in policy until after his meeting with the President at the second Quebec Conference. The President and the Prime Minister decided at Quebec that the time had not yet come for formal recognition. On the other hand Mr. Churchill telegraphed to the President after his return from Quebec that he had found a very strong feeling that we should go further towards recognition. Mr. Roosevelt answered on September 28 that it would be wiser to wait until the Germans had been driven from the whole of France, including Alsace-Lorraine. On October 14 the Prime Minister telegraphed to the President that in his view we could now decide upon recognition, and that the Provisional Government had the support of the majority of Frenchmen. Three days later Mr. Eden sent to Lord Halifax a draft formula of recognition. Mr. Roosevelt, in a reply of October 20, still held out for delay until the French had set up a real 'zone of the interior,'<sup>1</sup> and had completed the enlargement of the Consultative Assembly. The President said that he would not be satisfied merely with a statement of intention on the part of General de Gaulle.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office were therefore much surprised to hear on midnight on October 20-21, through S.H.A.E.F., that the State Department had sent a 'most immediate' telegram—dated October 19—to Mr. Caffery, United States diplomatic representative in Paris, instructing him to let General de Gaulle know in confidence that the President would agree to recognition as soon as the Provisional Government had published a decree regarding the zone of the interior. Mr. Caffery had acted on these instructions, and had then told Mr. Duff Cooper in the evening of October 20 of the President's intention.

In view of the President's reply to the Prime Minister, this action of the State Department seemed incomprehensible to the Foreign Office. Sir A. Cadogan asked Lord Halifax urgently for an explanation. He replied that the State Department said that they had given no instructions to Mr. Caffery to approach the French; and that, as far as they knew, the President had not yet made up his mind.<sup>3</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> i.e. an area—distinct from the 'forward zone' of military operations—in which a civilian administration could be fully established under a central French authority exercising effectively powers of government. General de Gaulle had already asked S.H.A.E.F. to declare a large area, including Paris and about three-quarters of France, as an 'interior zone.'

<sup>2</sup> The President also said that he wanted to handle the matter directly with the Prime Minister, and would prefer that the *modus operandi* should not be discussed between the State Department and the Foreign Office.

<sup>3</sup> The State Department had sent Mr. Caffery a summary of the President's message to the Prime Minister, and thought that Mr. Caffery must have misunderstood it. The President replied to a telegram from the Prime Minister that he regretted that his absence from Washington had resulted in more precipitate action by the State Department than he had contemplated in his message of October 20.



the morning of October 22 the United States Embassy telephoned to the Foreign Office that the President had decided to recognise the Provisional Government simultaneously with the announcement of the establishment of an Interior Zone, and that he intended to release this news on October 23. The Foreign Office at once instructed Mr. Duff Cooper to make a communication to M. Bidault,<sup>1</sup> and also asked Sir A. Clark Kerr to tell M. Molotov of the American decision, and to explain that we were not responsible for the short notice but hoped that the Soviet Government would join us and the United States Government in a simultaneous recognition of the French Provisional Government.

## (iv)

*Visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Paris, November 11-12, 1944: conclusion of a Franco-Soviet treaty: the question of an Anglo-French treaty.*

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden paid a visit to General de Gaulle in Paris on November 11-12, 1944. In the course of a friendly discussion on military and political questions the Prime Minister told General de Gaulle that we should be glad to hand over for occupation by the French some part of German territory allotted at present to British occupation. He agreed that the area so handed over should be regarded as a separate French zone of occupation.

On his return to London the Prime Minister wrote to President Roosevelt a favourable account of his visit.<sup>2</sup> He mentioned the French wish for a zone of occupation in Germany, and said that he had in mind a not distant time when the American armies would go home, and we should have 'great difficulty in maintaining large forces overseas, so contrary to our mode of life and disproportionate to our resources.'

In spite of the friendliness of his reception of the Prime Minister, General de Gaulle complained sharply in December at the British attitude to a proposal which he made for a Franco-Soviet pact. General de Gaulle went to Moscow early in December. Stalin had sent a message to the Prime Minister on December 2 that the General would probably raise the questions of a pact and of an extension of the French frontier to the left bank of the Rhine.<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office saw no objection to a Franco-Soviet pact if the obligations under it

<sup>1</sup> French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the greater part of this message, see Churchill, VI, 219-21.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of two messages from Stalin and of Mr. Churchill's reply, see Churchill, VI, 223-5.

did not conflict with those of the Anglo-Soviet treaty; they thought, however, that the best plan would be a tripartite Anglo-Franco-Soviet treaty. The Prime Minister replied in this sense to Stalin, but the French then understood from M. Molotov that the British Government were opposed to a bipartite Anglo-Soviet agreement. General de Gaulle was most indignant at this apparent refusal to meet French wishes. Mr. Balfour, British chargé d'affaires at Moscow at once explained the facts to M. Bidault, and pointed out that the misunderstanding would not have arisen if the French—like the Russians—had told us in advance of their proposal. Mr. Eden gave a similar explanation to M. Massigli.<sup>1</sup>

The French Government now let the Foreign Office know that they intended to suggest an Anglo-French treaty on lines similar to their agreement with Russia. The basis of the treaty would be the commitment of either party—subject to some general reservation of the overriding powers of a World Organisation—to assist the other in the event of an attack by Germany. The Foreign Office thought that we ought to agree to a treaty directed against a revival of German aggression, and that we might discuss with the French the possibility of establishing some kind of machinery for regional defence in western Europe, though we should avoid anything—beyond our existing commitments—which made us responsible for guaranteeing the territorial integrity of France or of our other western Allies.

The discussions about an Anglo-French treaty were delayed, partly because the French wanted the treaty to cover all outstanding questions, including those of the Levant and the future of Germany, between the two countries. M. Bidault came to London at Mr. Eden's invitation in the last week of February, 1945. General de Gaulle had been unwilling at first that M. Bidault should accept this invitation because the French demand for representation at the Yalta Conference had been rejected. In fact, the British Government would have agreed to French representation, at all events on limited terms, but President Roosevelt opposed it and the Prime Minister would not argue the matter further.<sup>2</sup> A later visit by M. Chauvel<sup>3</sup> was

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<sup>1</sup> M. Massigli thought that the Soviet Government had used the British proposal for a tripartite treaty as a means of pressure on the French to recognise the Lublin Committee as the Polish Government (see below, p. 313). The French refused full recognition but agreed to send a representative to Lublin to look after their prisoners of war.

<sup>2</sup> General de Gaulle was aware of the American refusal, and refused in turn to meet the President at Algiers on his way back to the United States. General de Gaulle also thought that the President, who was returning by ship, should have called at Marseilles. Mr. Hopkins went to Paris early in February. According to information received by Mr. Duff Cooper, he told General de Gaulle that he would find the United States more sympathetic than Great Britain to French views about the future of Germany. He was also said to have tried—without success—to defend American policy towards Marshal Pétain and Admiral Darlan.

<sup>3</sup> Secretary-General at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

cancelled, somewhat brusquely, by General de Gaulle, and the crisis in the Levant at the end of May made negotiations impossible for a time.<sup>1</sup> General de Gaulle showed his displeasure by a number of minor actions.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister continued to distrust the General's attitude towards Great Britain, and, although Sir A. Cadogan noted, on June 26, with characteristic fairness, that he suspected 'some of the difficulties' with General de Gaulle to be 'partly, at least, of our own making,' the Foreign Office considered it hardly possible to negotiate a treaty until after the French elections in October or November, 1945. Until that time there would be no proper representative assembly in France in which opinion could make itself felt and which could exercise effective pressure on the Government. Meanwhile we knew that General de Gaulle's attitude towards Great Britain was not shared by French opinion generally, and indeed was strongly opposed in his own Government. We should take care not to alienate this opinion, and we should go on doing everything possible to convince the French that we were not trying—as General de Gaulle persistently believed—to substitute British for French influence in the Levant.

There remained also a difference of view between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office on the question of forming some kind of 'western group.' The Foreign Office—with the agreement of the Chiefs of Staff—continued to hold the view that such an arrangement—in which the first step might be an Anglo-French treaty—would be of advantage to us (i) strategically because it would give us a defence in depth, (ii) politically because in association with the Western European countries and the Dominions we could hold our own more easily with the United States and the U.S.S.R. and (iii) economically because our own position would be greatly strengthened by close economic and commercial ties with Western Europe. The Prime Minister, however, still doubted whether a western group might not entail more liabilities than assets; France, Belgium and the Netherlands were so weak militarily that an agreement with them would impose a heavy military burden on us, while the best way to deal with our own defence was by strengthening our own air and sea forces.<sup>3</sup> Thus at the time of the change in the British Government, no decision on policy in the matter had been reached.

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<sup>1</sup> See below, section (v) of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. a refusal to invite Air Chief Marshal Tedder and General Morgan, when on a visit to Paris with General Eisenhower as members of S.H.A.E.F., to a dinner given in honour of General Eisenhower.

<sup>3</sup> See also below, p. 464.

*The situation in Syria and the Lebanon from November, 1943, to the Potsdam Conference.*

The essential features of British policy in the Levant were unchanged after the Lebanese crisis of November, 1943. The British Government were concerned directly, and for military reasons, with the maintenance of order in the Levant. They were also pledged to the fulfilment of the promise of independence to Syria and the Lebanon; this promise did not exclude a recognition of the special position of France in relation to the two States. The Foreign Office indeed continued to regard it as desirable in British as well as in French interests that France should retain at least some part of her old position.

The issues, however, between the French and the two Republics, especially in the latter half of 1944, were now sharper. Syrian nationalism was not less emotional and uncompromising than the nationalism of other small 'single-interest' States, but the matter was of more than local concern. Arab and Moslem opinion generally watched British and French policy, and trouble in Syria could easily spread throughout the Middle East. The attitude of the United States and of Russia did not make a Franco-Syrian settlement easier. French claims to a privileged position seemed to American opinion a form of 'colonialism' which the United States Government ought not to support. For different reasons, the Russians also backed the Syrian demands for full independence.

The British Government had been trying since the overthrow of the Vichy régime in Syria to persuade the French to offer concessions which—at least for a time—might have satisfied the Syrian nationalists. The difficulty now came from the other side. The liberation of France, and the prospect of a French Government established once more in full exercise of sovereignty increased the determination of the Syrians and Lebanese not to accept anything short of complete independence. In these circumstances, what was the British Government to do? They had put pressure on the French; how far were they to go in their pressure on the Levant States to come to an agreement with France? They could, and did, give friendly advice, but it was clear that this advice would not be taken. Moreover, as earlier, the Foreign Office doubted whether advice given through the British Mission would carry persuasion—still less conviction—with the Syrians and Lebanese. They also knew that Sir E. Spears had entirely lost the confidence of the French. Hence, though they realised that the post of British representative with the Levant States was not an enviable one, the Foreign Office, rightly or wrongly, considered it essential for the chances of a settlement that a new appointment

should be made. Mr. Duff Cooper in Algiers, and Lord Moyne<sup>1</sup> in Cairo took a similar view. The Prime Minister himself, in March, 1944, wrote to Sir E. Spears about the situation. On the other hand Mr. Churchill refused at the beginning of April to agree to Sir E. Spears' recall. Mr. Eden repeated his opinion at the end of June, and again a month later. At the end of August Mr. Eden made another attempt to persuade the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister once more refused an immediate recall, but agreed to make a change in a few months time, i.e. after the French elections, and the establishment of a new French Government. Meanwhile Sir E. Spears would be given another directive, and instructed that he should adhere strictly to its terms. Mr. Eden again asked the Prime Minister at the end of September to allow a new appointment. The Prime Minister said that he had promised Sir E. Spears another three months, and that only two of them had passed. Finally, after the visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Paris in November, the Prime Minister agreed that the time had come for a change. Sir E. Spears' resignation was announced on December 5, 1944.<sup>2</sup>

At this time the Syrians and Lebanese were still refusing any treaty with France. They had obtained diplomatic recognition from the United States in September without reference to the privileges of France. The Russians were taking a similar line, and opinion in the Levant States was becoming restive at the support which the British Government seemed to be giving to the French claims. Lord Killearn<sup>3</sup> at this time thought that the British Government were in danger of pursuing conflicting policies—encouraging Arab union, promoting Zionism in Palestine, and French predominance in Syria. On December 30 Sir E. Grigg reported a statement made in conversation with him by a member of the French *Délégation Générale*, on the latter's return from Paris, that no French Government could allow itself to be accused of sacrificing the French position in the Levant; France had suffered '*grands malheurs*,' and needed psychologically to keep a '*position spéciale*' in the Levant States such as that of Great Britain in the other Arab States. On the other hand Mr. Shone reported on December 31 that the attitude of the Syrian and Lebanese Ministers was '*even harder*' than he had expected. They said that a treaty was unnecessary; they could not trust the French not to use a treaty to re-establish a situation like that under the mandate, which—whatever the legal position—they regarded as dead.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden met the Syrian President, M.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Moyne was appointed Minister of State Resident in the Middle East on January 29, 1944. He was assassinated on November 6, 1944, by Jewish terrorists. Sir E. Grigg was appointed Minister Resident on November 21, 1944.

<sup>2</sup> Sir E. Spears was succeeded by Mr. T. A. Shone as Minister to the two Republics.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Miles Lampson was elevated to the peerage as Lord Killearn in 1943.

Quwatli, while at Cairo on their return from the Yalta Conference. The Prime Minister explained (and M. Quwatli agreed) that we did not want to take the place of the French in the Levant. We thought that the French must recognise the independence of the States, and that the States must not 'throw out the French altogether.' On February 27, 1945, the Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons in which he repeated this summary of British policy, and added 'It is not for us alone to defend by force either Syrian or Lebanese independence or French privilege. We seek both and we do not believe that they are incompatible. Too much must not be placed, therefore, upon the shoulders of Great Britain alone. We have to take note of the fact that Russia and the United States have recognised . . . Syrian and Lebanese independence, but do not favour any special position for any other foreign country.'<sup>1</sup>

At the end of April the Foreign Office heard that the French Government were intending to send three battalions of French North African troops to the Levant. The Foreign Office instructed Mr. Duff Cooper to speak to General de Gaulle on the risk that this action might cause trouble. General de Gaulle gave no sign that he would change his mind. The Foreign Office on May 1 asked the Prime Minister<sup>2</sup> whether he would write to General de Gaulle. The French—after long delay—were about to state their terms for a treaty. There would be strong feeling anyhow if (as the Foreign Office had reason to expect) these terms included a demand for a military base. If the French accompanied their demands by a show of force, they might start trouble throughout the Middle East. The Prime Minister refused at first to send a personal message, since he thought that he would get nothing more than an insulting answer.<sup>3</sup>

Later, however, after consulting the War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff, Mr. Churchill sent a message to General de Gaulle offering to withdraw all British forces from Syria and the Lebanon as soon as treaties between France and the two States were in operation. He warned General de Gaulle of the danger of sending French reinforcements at this time. General de Gaulle did not cancel the despatch of the troops. The first batch arrived on May 6, and disembarked without incident. An equivalent number of troops were also re-embarked, and meanwhile the French presented their terms for a treaty. The Syrian Government refused even to discuss the terms, and, on May 23, appealed to Mr. Churchill to secure the withdrawal of the French.

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<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb. H of C., 5th ser. vol. 408, col. 1290.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. during Mr. Eden's illness.

<sup>3</sup> General de Gaulle had already told Mr. Duff Cooper that he regarded the issue as one of prestige between Great Britain and France in the Levant.



The Foreign Office instructed Mr. Shone on May 25 to warn the Syrian Government against allowing disorder; they also asked Mr. Duff Cooper to warn the French Government of the growing tension. On the following day the Foreign Office issued a statement regretting the despatch of French reinforcements and the breakdown in the negotiations over a treaty.

On May 29 heavy fighting broke out between French troops and Syrians in Damascus, and the French began to shell the city.<sup>1</sup> The Syrians at once appealed to Mr. Churchill. The War Cabinet decided on the evening of May 30 first to try to get American support for a message to General de Gaulle informing him that General Paget<sup>2</sup> had been ordered to intervene to prevent further bloodshed, and calling upon him (General de Gaulle) to order French troops to withdraw to barracks and to cease fire except in self-defence. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden left the meeting of the War Cabinet for a time to tell M. Massigli of our intention, and to say that once order had been restored we should be glad to open discussions in London.

President Truman<sup>3</sup> did not reply until May 31. The British Government could not wait for his answer, and telegraphed to Mr. Duff Cooper to give their proposed message to General de Gaulle. Owing to a mischance this message did not reach General de Gaulle until about three-quarters of an hour after Mr. Eden had read the text of it in the House of Commons. General de Gaulle refused to see Mr. Duff Cooper in the evening of May 31, and on June 1 announced that the French authorities had ordered a cease fire on May 30. The Foreign Office did not think that this statement was accurate. The French had not notified either the British authorities in the Middle East or the British Government in London at the time, and firing had in fact continued through May 31. The French troops were withdrawn from Damascus on June 3, and on the same day a British detachment entered the city.

The proposals for a tripartite conference—French, British, and American—broke down. Hence the British Government could do nothing to bring about a settlement in the Levant. At the Potsdam Conference the Russians proposed a four-Power Conference on the situation in the Levant States. The Prime Minister once more explained British policy. We did not want any special advantages for ourselves in the Levant States. We had told General de Gaulle that British troops would be withdrawn from the States after the conclusion of a satisfactory treaty between them and the French. An earlier withdrawal would probably lead to a massacre of French soldiers and

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<sup>1</sup> Disturbances had already begun elsewhere on May 27.

<sup>2</sup> British Commander-in-Chief, Middle East.

<sup>3</sup> President Roosevelt had died on April 12, 1945.

civilians, cause disturbance throughout the Middle East, and endanger communications necessary for the war against Japan. We hoped that the Syrians and Lebanese would concede special privileges to France, but we could not go beyond giving the French a friendly support in the negotiations. President Truman said that he had agreed with British intervention, but that he did not think that the French should have special privileges in the Levant States or that the States would grant them. Stalin took the same view, and withdrew the Russian proposal for a conference.

## CHAPTER XIV

Anglo-Russian relations during the first nine months of 1944: Russian rejection of British proposals for a Russo-Polish settlement: the Prime Minister's proposal for a temporary division of spheres of action in the Balkans

### (i)

*Further British attempts to secure a settlement of the Russo-Polish frontier dispute: the Prime Minister's messages of January 28 and February 21, 1944, to Stalin: Russian allegations against the Polish Underground Movement.*

ON January 5, 1944, the Polish Government, in view of reports that the Russian armies had crossed the frontier of Poland, issued a statement affirming their own position as 'the sole and legal steward and spokesman of the Polish nation' and asking for the 'earliest re-establishment of Polish sovereign administration in the liberated territories of the Republic.'<sup>1</sup> They said that the Underground authorities in Poland had been instructed in October to continue their resistance to the Germans, avoid conflicts with the Soviet armies, and cooperate with their commanders in the event of the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations. Although Stalin made a sarcastic comment on this declaration in a message of January 7 to the Prime Minister, a Russian statement put out four days later was not altogether unfriendly. The 'émigré Polish Government, isolated from its people' was described as incapable of organising active resistance to the Germans or of establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union, but the statement concluded with a reference to the interest of the two countries in 'solid friendly relations.' The Russians asserted that the incorporation of the western Ukraine and western White Russia into the U.S.S.R. had been carried out by a fair plebiscite in 1939; these territories would not be returned to Poland. On the other hand the Soviet Government would accept a frontier running approximately along the Curzon line.

Mr. Balfour reported from Moscow that in his view M. Molotov really believed that the Russian statement was an overture of which the British and United States Governments would approve. The

<sup>1</sup> The original draft referred to 'all the liberated territories.' Under strong pressure from the Foreign Office the Polish Government omitted the word 'all'.

Foreign Office also thought that an agreement might be reached. They asked the Polish Government to shew them the draft text of their reply, and, again, suggested changes in it. The reply, in the form of a statement by the Polish Government, said that the ceaseless war waged by the Polish nation, under the direction of their Government, was a complete answer to the Soviet allegations. The Polish Government could not recognise unilateral decisions or *faits accomplis*; they were approaching the British and United States Governments to secure, through their mediation, a discussion of all outstanding questions with the Soviet Government. In giving a copy of this statement to M. Gusev on January 14—the evening before publication—Mr. Eden said that the Poles had authorised him to explain that ‘all outstanding questions’ included frontier questions. Mr. Eden insisted that the statement was honestly meant, and gave a real opportunity for a settlement.

The Soviet Government published a reply on January 17. They said that the Polish statement was a refusal to accept the Curzon line. They rejected the proposal for negotiations on the ground that they could not negotiate with a government with which they had no diplomatic relations, and that the existing Polish Government did not wish to re-establish good relations with them. M. Molotov told Mr. Balfour that the resumption of relations was impossible until there was an ‘improved Polish Government.’

Mr. Eden spoke strongly to M. Gusev about the Russian reply, but to no effect. The Foreign Office inclined to think that—as the Poles had said—the real aim of the Russians was to set up a Polish Government which would give them control of Polish territory up to the German frontier. Mr. Balfour telegraphed from Moscow on January 23 that the Soviet censorship had cut out from a report of a British journalist in Moscow a phrase to the effect that, if the Poles had accepted the Curzon line as a basis of discussion, the Russians would have agreed to open negotiations.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, on his return to London, the Prime Minister, with Mr. Eden, had seen M. Mikolajczyk, M. Romer, Polish Foreign Minister, and Count Raczynski. The Prime Minister at this time continued to be less sympathetic than the Foreign Office with the Polish difficulties in accepting the Russian demands. He had telegraphed to Mr. Eden on January 7 that he thought of making a public statement that we had never undertaken to defend the existing Polish frontiers, and that the Russians had a right to make sure of their own security.

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<sup>1</sup> The United States Government, to whom the Polish Government had also appealed, issued a statement on January 17 that they had approached the Soviet Government with an offer to try to arrange Polish-Soviet discussions on the question of the resumption of diplomatic relations. M. Molotov replied that the conditions for mediation would not exist until the Polish Government had been changed by the exclusion of ‘pro-fascist imperialist elements’ and the inclusion of ‘democratic elements.’

He thought that we ought not to give the Poles the slightest hope of further help or recognition unless they supported the decisions which we and the Russians had reached. The Prime Minister also proposed to send a message to Stalin that he would do his utmost 'to bring the Poles to reason.'<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden persuaded the Prime Minister not to send this message, but Mr. Churchill said to the Polish Ministers on January 20 that there was little room for negotiation in the matter, and that the Russians had certain rights, since they had contributed a great deal in two wars towards rebuilding a strong and independent Poland. He asked the Poles to let him tell Stalin that they would negotiate on the basis of the Curzon line. If they agreed to do so, Mr. Churchill would protest strongly against the Russian tendency to call in question the authority of the Polish Government. M. Mikolajczyk, who had received information that the Russians had ordered all Polish Underground detachments to be disarmed,<sup>2</sup> said that he would consult the Polish Government, but that the most urgent problem was to secure agreement about cooperation between the Russian forces and the Polish Underground Movement. On January 23 Count Raczynski put a number of questions to Mr. Eden on behalf of the Polish Government. They asked, in particular, whether they could be assured of taking over the administration of Polish territory as it was freed from German occupation, and whether they could obtain a guarantee from Great Britain and, if possible, the United States, of the territorial integrity of Poland within her new frontiers, and of Polish independence and freedom from interference in internal affairs.

The War Cabinet decided on January 25 that in this most difficult situation the best approach would be a message from the Prime Minister to Stalin. This message was given to Stalin by Sir A. Clark Kerr on February 1. The Prime Minister told Stalin of his discussions with the Polish Ministers, and of the questions which they had put. He said that we had advised them to accept the Russian proposals (he had not mentioned the Russian demand for Königsberg), in return for the 'fine compensations' offered to them in the north and west. He explained that the Poles were greatly concerned about the relations between their Underground Movement and the advancing Soviet armies. He pointed out that the creation of a rival Polish Government, together with disturbances in Poland, would raise issues in Great Britain and the United States harmful to the close accord between the Great Powers upon which the future of the world depended.

Stalin said to Sir A. Clark Kerr on February 2 that he wanted the 'Polish Government in exile' to state definitely that they accepted the Curzon line, and that this Government must be 'reconstructed' before

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister had, in fact, used these words to Stalin on January 4 in suggesting that M. Benes might help to bring the Poles to reason.

<sup>2</sup> In at least one instance some of the officers were said to have been shot.

the Soviet Government could resume relations with it. He spoke sharply about the way in which the Polish Government directed the Underground Movement, and said that, if the latter opposed the Russians, they would be attacked and disarmed. If they cooperated with the Russians, the Red Army would assist them. On the other hand, Stalin said that the Poles need not be anxious about their position when the Red Army was in occupation of Poland west of the Curzon line. The Polish Government would be allowed to go back and to establish the broad-based kind of government which they had in mind. After the war the Poles would be free and independent, and the Russians would not interfere in their choice of government.

Stalin's reply—received on February 5—to Mr. Churchill's message was on similar lines, but insisted upon the annexation of Königsberg to the U.S.S.R. The Foreign Office thought that a settlement was now more possible, and that we should give it some kind of guarantee even though the United States would not join us. On the other hand the difficulty was that the Russians would get what they wanted at once while the Poles would have to wait until the end of the war for the territory promised to them in the west. In any case the Poles did not believe Stalin to be sincere. They considered that the Russians were agreeing to deal with M. Mikolajczyk in order to force upon him the responsibility of accepting the Curzon line without any immediate *quid pro quo*. The result would be to divide the Polish Government, and possibly to bring about civil war in Poland. The Russians would then set up their own puppet government in Warsaw.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw the Polish Ministers on February 6, and advised them to accept the Curzon line and the Russian demands for Lwow and Königsberg. M. Mikolajczyk said that the Underground leaders were ready to cooperate with the Russians even if Polish-Soviet diplomatic relations were not re-established. He was unwilling to state in advance his acceptance of the Curzon line. He suggested that a demarcation line might be arranged, and the fixing of the frontier left until the end of the war. He said that the Poles in Poland would not agree to the surrender of territory. He was sure that the establishment of a 'National Council of the Homeland,'<sup>1</sup> by the Communist party in Warsaw shewed the Russian intention to set up a 'Committee of National Liberation' composed of pro-Soviet Poles in the U.S.S.R., the United States, and, if possible, Great Britain. After they had crossed the Curzon line the Russians would establish a rival 'Polish Government' through this puppet agency.

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<sup>1</sup> This 'Council' had been formed in December, 1943. On January 30, 1944, a Polish broadcast from a Russian-controlled station described the purpose of the Council as the organisation of national resistance to the Germans; the Polish Government in London was alleged to be 'incapable of carrying out this task.' (See also below, p. 290, note 1.) M. Gusev, on February 9, denied that the Russians intended to set up a Communist administration in Warsaw.



The Prime Minister still argued that the Russian offer was advantageous to the Poles. If, however, the Poles rejected it, he would do his best to settle the frontier question with the Russians and to secure humane treatment for the Poles. With this intention Mr. Churchill drafted a message to Stalin that the Polish Government were willing to discuss the frontier question, though they could not make any public declaration accepting the Curzon line, because they would be repudiated by their own Underground Movement, and also because the arrangement would appear one-sided since they could not state publicly or precisely the compensation which they would receive. In any case the general settlement of Europe could be formally agreed only at the time of an armistice or peace.

On the other hand the Polish Government realised the necessity of a working agreement with the Soviet Government in view of the advance of the Soviet armies. The Underground leaders had accepted instructions to collaborate with the Russians even if the frontier question had not been settled as they wished. As part of a working agreement the Polish Government would agree secretly with the Russians on a line of demarcation corresponding to the Curzon line and running west of Lwow. The territory east of this line would pass at once under Soviet jurisdiction; the Polish authorities would take over the administration of the territory west of the line. The Polish Ministers would return to Warsaw and recreate the Polish State and Government on a broad basis. They could not agree to any immediate changes which might seem to be forced upon them by foreign dictation. We should be willing to guarantee the settlement at the Peace Conference, and to enter into an agreement at once with the Soviet Government in favour of the Curzon line.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office suggested that the terms of the proposed arrangement should be more definite—otherwise there would be charges of bad faith—and that the Poles would be wise to agree at once to certain changes in their Government. The Prime Minister's draft was therefore amended to state that the Polish Government were ready to negotiate on the basis of the Curzon line as far as the former Austrian frontier, and a line thence passing west of Lwow to the Carpathians and leaving Przemyśl to Poland; this frontier line would be altered later, where necessary, 'in the interest of national homogeneity.' The Polish Government would remove General Sosnkowski from his post as Commander-in-Chief and obtain the resignation from the Polish Government of two Ministers<sup>2</sup> to whom the Russians objected. The British and Soviet Governments would join in an

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister also mentioned his approval of the Russian claim to Königsberg. Mr. Eden considered that we should not go out of our way to support this 'spurious' claim. The message as finally sent contained an approval of the claim.

<sup>2</sup> The two Ministers were General Kukiel and Professor Kot. See below, p. 289.

undertaking to recognise and respect the independence of Poland and to secure the incorporation in Poland of Danzig, Upper Silesia, East Prussia (west and south of a line not defined),<sup>1</sup> and of as much territory up to the Oder as the Polish Government might see fit to accept. Since the Polish Government could not be expected to recognise formally the cession of the eastern territories before they had obtained the new territory in the west, the Curzon line should be taken temporarily as the dividing line between the areas of Russian and of Polish civil administration.

Neither M. Mikolajczyk nor M. Romer would accept a tripartite agreement on these terms. They were unwilling to agree in principle to cede to Russia a third of the territory of the Polish Republic. They did not, however, refuse to discuss the frontier question, and seemed willing to accept a line somewhere between the 1921 frontier and the Curzon line. In view of the Polish refusal the Prime Minister could not send his proposed message with the changes suggested by the Foreign Office. He therefore proposed to go back to his own draft. He and Mr. Eden met the two Polish Ministers again on February 16. M. Mikolajczyk presented a short paper stating once more that the Poles could not accept the Curzon line or agree that a decision on the frontiers should be put into effect before the end of the war. They suggested that a line of demarcation running east of Vilna and Lwow should be accepted at once. They also said that the inclusion of Königsberg in the U.S.S.R. would be detrimental to Polish interests, and that they could not make changes in their Government or in the command of their armed forces at the demand of a foreign State.<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden replied that the Russians would not agree to a proposal merely for a line of demarcation, and that there was no practical alternative to accepting the Curzon line. We could not stop the Russians from marching through Poland. If no settlement were reached, they might set up a puppet government in Poland, and hold a plebiscite in which their opponents would be prevented from voting. The Russians might reject our proposals; in this case there would be serious difficulties between them and Great Britain and the United States. If they did not reject the plan, we should at least have some time in which to work out an arrangement, and the Polish Government could go back to Warsaw.

The two Polish Ministers let the Foreign Office know on February 17 that they were in favour of a message to Stalin on the general lines suggested by the Prime Minister, but that the rest of the Cabinet would not agree to it. M. Mikolajczyk, with the approval of M. Romer and Count Raczynski, had therefore decided that, although he could

<sup>1</sup> No line seems to have been agreed at the Teheran Conference. See above, pp. 253-4.

<sup>2</sup> On February 12 a bitter attack on the Polish Government appeared in *Pravda*. Sir A. Cadogan protested to M. Gusev against this attack.

not put forward the proposals in the name of the Polish Government, he could tell the Soviet Government that he acquiesced in them and would not later disavow them.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister, after making changes in his draft to meet the Polish wishes, sent the message on February 21 through Sir A. Clark Kerr. In its final form the message began with the statement that the Polish Government were ready, with British participation, to discuss with the Soviet Government, as part of a general settlement, a new Russo-Polish frontier. Since the compensations which Poland would receive in the north and west could not yet be stated publicly or precisely, the Polish Government could not publicly declare their willingness to cede territory. Until they had returned to Poland, and had been allowed to consult the Polish people, they could not formally abdicate their rights over any part of Poland, but the prosecution of the war in collaboration with the Soviet armies would be greatly facilitated if the Soviet Government would allow the return of the Polish Government as soon as possible, and, in consultation with their British and American allies, arrange with them for the establishment of a Polish civil administration in given districts. The Prime Minister explained that he had told the Poles that the Russians would not agree to leave Lwow and Vilna under Polish administration, but he wished to be able to assure them that the area west of the Curzon line would be under Polish administration.

The Prime Minister said that, with the consent of their Underground leaders, the Poles had ordered full collaboration in Poland with the Soviet commanders. They also assured the Soviet Government that, when they had resumed diplomatic relations with them, they would include in their Government only persons determined to cooperate with the Soviet Union. Finally the Prime Minister said that the British Government would support the proposed settlement at the Peace Conference, and guarantee it in post-war years.<sup>2</sup>

Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to add that the message had been drafted in close consultation with MM. Mikolajczyk and Romer, and sent with their authorisation, and that a Russian rejection of the offer, which had been made with great courage by the Polish Ministers, would have a serious effect on British and American opinion.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Mikolajczyk said that the Polish Government thought it most important that Mr. Roosevelt should take parallel action in Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister said in the House of Commons on February 22 that the Curzon line dealt, at any rate partly, with the frontier problem, and that the Russian demand for 'reassurance against future attacks from the west' was neither unreasonable nor unjust.

<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister sent a copy of his message to Mr. Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt telegraphed to Stalin that he agreed with the suggestion for a tentative settlement of the Polish-Soviet boundary, and hoped that Stalin would accept it.

## (ii)

*Stalin's refusal of the British proposals for a Russo-Polish settlement: British decision to delay a reply: M. Mikolajczyk's visit to the United States: secret Russo-Polish conversations in London: sudden increase in the Russian demands. (February 28-June 23, 1944).*

Stalin received the Prime Minister's message in a harsh and unfriendly way. He saw Sir A. Clark Kerr on the night of February 28-9. He tried to dismiss 'with a snigger' the position of the Polish Government. When Sir A. Clark Kerr said that the Poles would not disavow the Prime Minister's proposals, Stalin commented: 'Is that serious? How handsome of them.' M. Molotov confused the issue by talking of General Sosnkowski. After a long argument, Stalin said that he had little hope of a settlement on the basis of the Prime Minister's letter. He did not think that the Poles really wanted a settlement. He asked only for the Curzon line and the reconstruction of the Polish Government. He would not agree that the Polish Government could not now accept the Curzon line, and that the reconstruction of their Government should await their return to Warsaw.

Stalin's formal reply, on March 3, was in similar terms.<sup>1</sup> The War Cabinet agreed with Mr. Eden's view that we could not leave matters at this stage.<sup>2</sup> We had an obligation to the Poles. We had persuaded them to offer concessions and ought to protect them against Russian intransigence. The Foreign Office therefore drafted a reply which was sent on March 7 as a message from the Prime Minister to Stalin. The Prime Minister repeated that his proposals gave the Russians a *de facto* occupation of the Curzon line, and that, if a general Russo-Polish settlement were reached, we, and doubtless the Americans, would support it at the Peace Conference. Force could achieve much, but force supported by the good will of the world could achieve more. The Prime Minister and the War Cabinet would be sorry indeed if Stalin could have no relations with the Polish Government which we should 'continue to recognise as the Government of the Ally for whom we declared war upon Hitler.' Finally the Prime Minister said that he would do his utmost to prevent a rift between himself and Stalin, since all his hopes for the future of the world were based upon the friendship and cooperation of the western democracies and the U.S.S.R.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stalin said to Mr. Harriman on March 4 that the Poles were 'fooling' the Prime Minister, and that, if the Polish Government were not reconstructed, a new government would appear.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden's comment on Stalin's reply was that it raised 'most disquieting thoughts' whether the Soviet régime would ever cooperate with the west.

<sup>3</sup> The text of the Prime Minister's message had been sent to, and was approved by President Roosevelt.

Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to explain to Stalin that we should have to tell the Poles the general sense of the Russian answer. The answer might become public, and cause great disappointment in Great Britain and the United States. The Prime Minister would also have to make a statement in Parliament. Furthermore the instructions sent to the Polish Underground Movement had anticipated a friendly settlement. If fighting now broke out between the Underground movement and the Russian forces, the position would be even worse. We could not give up our recognition of the Polish Government in London, and a divergence of policy in the matter between the U.S.S.R. and the two western Powers would affect the operations which all three were about to undertake. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to point out the seriousness of these considerations, but not to say anything which might be taken as a threat, or as a change of policy towards the U.S.S.R.; the more difficult our affairs of state became, the more important was it for us to maintain and strengthen the personal relationships. Finally the Prime Minister suggested that the worst difficulties would be avoided if, without making any formal agreement and resuming relations with the Poles, the Soviet Government observed the spirit of our proposals.

Sir A. Clark Kerr asked at once for an interview with Stalin. No reply was given to him. On March 12 therefore he sent the Prime Minister's message to M. Molotov and again asked for an interview. On March 16 Stalin telegraphed to the Prime Minister complaining of a leakage of his (Stalin's) last message to the press. Mr. Churchill replied that the leakage was due to information supplied to British and American correspondents by the Soviet Embassy in London; M. Gusev himself had given the information to the British correspondent.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister again reminded Stalin that he would soon have to make a statement in the House of Commons. In view of the failure to secure a Russo-Polish arrangement he would have to say that we continued to recognise the Polish Government with which we had been in unbroken relationship since the invasion of Poland in 1939, and that we now considered that all questions of territorial change must await the armistice or Peace Conference and that we could not now recognise any forcible transfer of territory.

Meanwhile on March 19 Sir A. Clark Kerr had at last seen M. Molotov. M. Molotov said that he had not been able to arrange an interview with Stalin because, in his present military preoccupations, Stalin had decided to cut himself off from politics. Sir A. Clark Kerr

<sup>1</sup> Stalin denied that M. Gusev was responsible for the leakage. After further investigation the Foreign Office found that there had been a misunderstanding with regard to the British correspondent, and that he had obtained his facts not from M. Gusev but from reports in the American press. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed at the end of July to inform M. Molotov accordingly. The Foreign Office remained convinced that the original leakage, though not made to a British correspondent, came through the Soviet Embassy.

did not believe this explanation, and made it clear that we expected an answer from Stalin. This answer came in a long and argumentative message on March 23 in which Stalin accused the Prime Minister of using threats and of breaking the engagement which he had made at Teheran. He objected to the statement which the Prime Minister proposed to make in the House of Commons. The Soviet Government were merely claiming the restoration of their legal rights to territory which 'even Curzon and the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers recognised in 1919 as being non-Polish.' They had no dispute with the Polish people, but only with the 'émigré' Government in London. The Russian people would consider the Prime Minister's statement as an undeserved insult, and Stalin would regard it as an unjust and unfriendly act towards the Soviet Union.

The War Cabinet decided to delay sending an answer to this message, and meanwhile to consult the President. The Prime Minister considered that there had been no firm agreement at Teheran about the acceptance of the Curzon line. The Foreign Office, however, thought that Stalin could say that we were committed in principle to it. We were indeed committed, both at Teheran and in our subsequent messages, to the Curzon line as part of a general agreement. It was also probably in Polish interests that the Russians should also be committed to the whole settlement, since otherwise they might argue that they were free to ask for the Ribbentrop-Molotov line of 1939. Stalin had been consistent in asking only for two things—the Curzon line and a reconstitution of the Polish Government. Whatever doubts we might have about the future, we could not at present accuse the Russians of any breach of faith.

The War Cabinet decided that the answer to Stalin should be sent in the name of the British Government, and not as a personal message from the Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup> The message should state that the Prime Minister had not gone back on what he had thought just and reasonable at Teheran. He had advised the Poles to accept the Curzon line, and his messages to Stalin had suggested a working arrangement to get over the difficulty that the Poles found themselves unable to agree publicly to the Curzon line in isolation from other important issues concerning the future of Poland which could not be settled at present. We felt strongly that some such working arrangement was necessary in order to secure the full cooperation of the Polish Underground Movement which was controlled by the Polish Government in London. In view of the Russian rejection of our proposals, a formal settlement of the frontier question, as far as we were concerned, would have to be postponed until the Peace Conference. We could only

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<sup>1</sup> See also below, p. 288.



maintain our previous position that we did not recognise territorial changes effected during the war other than by agreement between the parties concerned. We must continue to regard the Polish Government in London as the legitimate Government of Poland. This Government controlled important armed forces now fighting with us, and our relations had not been interrupted since the German attack on Poland. If the Soviet Government would not discuss the matter further, we could only withdraw our mediation and announce its failure, but we did not wish to insult or discredit our Russian ally.<sup>1</sup>

On April 7 Count Raczynski gave the Foreign Office a memorandum describing a satisfactory agreement between the Polish Underground forces in Volhynia and the advancing Soviet armies in the area. The Poles were still nervous, but hoped that similar contacts might be made elsewhere. In these circumstances the Foreign Office suggested that the reply to Stalin and the proposed parliamentary statement should be held over until the situation was more clear. The Foreign Office also seems to have thought that we should have more chance of influencing the Russians after our cross-channel invasion had taken place. Hence no personal messages about Poland were exchanged between the Prime Minister and Stalin during April or May.<sup>2</sup> On May 24 the Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons in which he tried to remove Russian suspicions of our motives.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of May the Foreign Office considered that the relations between the Poles and the Red Army were better than the Polish Government had expected. On the other hand the Soviet Government were evidently trying to weaken the position of the Polish Government and to find Poles who were willing to serve them. The Polish Government continued to think that the loyalty of the Underground Movement to them enabled them to resist Russian pressure because the Russians needed the collaboration of the Polish forces. A new Russian move seemed to confirm this view. On May 23 M. Romer told Mr. Eden that—on Russian initiative<sup>4</sup>—M. Lebedev, Soviet Minister to the Allied Governments established in London, had held a secret meeting with M. Grabski, President of the Polish National Council in London. A second meeting took place on May 31 at which M. Grabski proposed that a special delegation headed by the Polish Prime Minister should go to Moscow to conclude a treaty

<sup>1</sup> In sending a copy of this draft message to President Roosevelt the Prime Minister said that he believed the Soviet bark to be worse than their bite. They did not want to separate themselves from their western Allies, and might be more careful about Poland without giving us any assurances in the matter. Mr. Churchill suggested the President might now invite M. Mikolajczyk to the United States. The President replied on April 5 that he agreed with the terms of the message.

<sup>2</sup> See also, below, p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> Parl. Deb., 5th ser., H. of C., vol. 400, cols. 778-9.

<sup>4</sup> The Russians had made in March the first suggestion for contact of this kind.

supplementing the Soviet-Polish agreement of July, 1941, and settling the question of collaboration between the Polish Underground organisation and the Soviet forces. The delegation would discuss post-war relations and the frontier question. The resumption of diplomatic relations would take place at the conclusion of the treaty. M. Benes also called on M. Mikolajczyk to tell him that he had been asked to communicate the views of the Soviet Government on certain questions which the latter felt it difficult to raise with the Poles. The Russians sincerely wanted an agreement, and recognised that the composition of the Polish Government was a matter which concerned the Poles, but they objected to General Sosnkowski and to M. Kot and General Kukiel.

At this point M. Mikolajczyk went to the United States. He came back to London on June 14 well satisfied with his visit. He said that the President thought that the Polish frontier should run east of Lwow and should include Königsberg as well as Silesia, and that he had some hope of persuading Stalin to give up Vilna. The Foreign Office thought that the President—not for the first time—was dangerously vague and optimistic. Mr. Churchill warned M. Mikolajczyk that there was no chance of retaining Vilna and that the Poles would be wise to give up Lwow. He also said that the Poles should not put too much emphasis on some favourable remarks which Stalin had made to a Polish-American Professor Lange whom he had invited to Moscow.<sup>1</sup> The Russian change of attitude might well be due only to a wish to get the help of the Polish Underground Movement which was turning out to be of more value than they had expected.

The Prime Minister's warning was justified. M. Mikolajczyk saw M. Lebedev on June 20 and 22. The meetings were friendly. M. Lebedev had no proposals to make, but found no difficulties in M. Mikolajczyk's suggestions for a resumption of diplomatic relations and a common plan of action for military collaboration and administration. M. Lebedev made it clear that the Soviet Government still regarded the Curzon line as the only acceptable frontier; he did not rule out of discussion M. Mikolajczyk's proposal for a temporary demarcation line. On June 23, however, there was a sudden change. M. Lebedev said that, before the resumption of diplomatic relations, the Soviet Government would insist upon the resignation of the Ministers obnoxious to them, and the complete reconstruction of the Polish Government to include representatives of the 'democratic' Poles from Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., the United States and the National Council in Warsaw. The new government would condemn the previous administration for their error over Katyn, and would

<sup>1</sup> Professor Lange (of the University of Chicago) and a Polish-American Catholic priest, Fr. S. Orlemanski, had visited Moscow at Russian invitation, and with the consent of the President. On their return to the United States they spoke enthusiastically about Stalin's wish for a strong, free, and independent Poland.

accept the Curzon line (leaving Lwow to Russia). M. Lebedev presented these terms on a 'take it or leave it basis.' In these circumstances M. Mikolajczyk could reply only that he had nothing more to say.<sup>1</sup>

## (iii)

*The enigma of Russian policy: the Pravda article of January 17, 1944: the Prime Minister's proposal for a temporary division of spheres of action in the Balkans: American objections to the proposal.*

As Mr. Eden had noted on Stalin's message of March 3, 1944, to the Prime Minister,<sup>2</sup> the indifference of the Russians to the views of their Western allies on the Polish question raised 'most disquieting thoughts.' British policy was based on the idea of cooperation with the Russians after the war. Without such cooperation the result of victory over Germany would be merely to substitute one danger for another, and to delay—perhaps indefinitely—the economic recovery of Europe. The British Government therefore were willing to go a very long way in conceding Soviet demands. Even if they had doubts of Russian good will, they could hardly shew them. They could not assume a break with the Russians to be inevitable, and, if it were not inevitable, the only sensible policy was to act as though the Russians were not less anxious than themselves for collaboration.

The difficulty of interpreting the intentions of the small governing oligarchy of the U.S.S.R. was apparent in minor as well as in major questions. Thus on January 17, 1944, *Pravda* published a story from its 'Cairo correspondent' of an alleged meeting of two British representatives with Ribbentrop to discuss the terms of a separate peace. The Foreign Office had evidence, including a statement by the Soviet press attaché at Chungking to a member of the British Embassy, that the Soviet Government had sent out special instructions that the report should be given wide publicity. The Foreign Office also established the fact that *Pravda* had no correspondent in Cairo. The Prime Minister telegraphed a long message to Stalin pointing out the damaging effect of reports of this kind. Stalin made a somewhat

<sup>1</sup> On this same day the Union of Polish Patriots (a Communist body formed in the U.S.S.R. in the spring of 1943) declared its unwillingness to recognise the Polish Government in London. They alleged that this Government was based on the 'illegal constitution of 1935' and that the 'real representatives' of the Polish people were the 'Polish National Council of the Homeland' which was preparing the way for the formation of a Provisional National Government. This declaration was not made public until July 1. The charge of illegality had not been previously made in Russian or Russian-sponsored propaganda against the Polish Government in London.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 285, note 2.

argumentative but not unfriendly reply, and Sir A. Clark Kerr reported on February 13 that the Russians did not seem dissatisfied with the existing state of Anglo-Russian relations. M. Maisky, in talking to Sir A. Clark Kerr about the *Pravda* story, had agreed that the Soviet Government would 'like to see the whole thing forgotten.'

At the beginning of April Lord Halifax reported that Mr. Hull felt that 'the tide of Moscow and Teheran' had ebbed, and that he was inclined to favour 'a very plain-spoken approach' by the President and the Prime Minister to Stalin 'pointing out to him where we should get to if he went on taking one-sided action.'<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister agreed with this plan, and thought that meanwhile we should 'relapse into a moody silence so far as Stalin is concerned.' Mr. Churchill would send no more personal telegrams, and Sir A. Clark Kerr should not ask for interviews. Mr. Churchill was 'anxious to save as many Poles as possible from being murdered.' Argument with the Russians merely made them angry, but events would soon compel them to come to us with questions to which we should be in no hurry to reply. Mr. Churchill could not feel any confidence in the Communist leaders; he did not wish 'to go back on our desire' to establish friendly relations with them, but 'our and especially my very courteous and even effusive personal approaches have had a bad effect.' Mr. Eden agreed that we should discontinue for a time any personal messages, but thought that Mr. Hull's proposal would lead only to more argument, and that we should not conclude that the Russians had decided not to cooperate with us. Nonetheless Mr. Eden was disturbed at the Russian attitude. On April 3, he noted on a departmental minute putting the least unfavourable interpretation of the Russian behaviour that he would 'dearly like to accept' such a summing-up, but that he was increasingly afraid that Russia had vast aims which might include 'the domination of eastern Europe and even the Mediterranean, and the "communising" of much that remains.'

On May 4 the Prime Minister asked Mr. Eden for a short paper on 'the brute issues between us and the Soviet Government which are developing in Italy, in Roumania, in Bulgaria, in Yugoslavia, and above all, in Greece . . . Broadly speaking the issue is: are we going to acquiesce in the Communisation of the Balkans and perhaps of Italy? . . . I am of opinion on the whole that we ought to come to a definite conclusion about it, and that if our conclusion is that we resist the Communist infusion and invasion we should put it to them

<sup>1</sup> The State Department was at this time much worried over the hostility shewn by the Russians to the American advisers to the Iranian Government. See below, p. 316

pretty plainly at the best moment that military events permit. We should of course have to consult the United States first.<sup>1</sup>

On May 5 Mr. Eden told M. Gusev that, in return for our willingness to let the Soviet Government take the lead in policy with regard to Roumania, we felt entitled to ask them to support our policy in Greece. M. Gusev reported to Mr. Eden on May 18 that the Soviet Government agreed with this suggestion, but wanted to know whether we had consulted the Americans about it. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed to ask the State Department whether they would agree to our telling the Russians that we should take the lead in Greece, and the Russians in Roumania. We were basing this proposal on 'military realities.' It would not affect the rights and responsibilities of the three Powers at the Peace Conference. We were not 'carving up' the Balkans into spheres of influence, still less excluding the United States from the formulation or execution of Allied policy.

Lord Halifax mentioned the proposal to Mr. Hull on May 30. Mr. Hull was clearly nervous about it. The Prime Minister sent a message to the President about the proposal on May 31.<sup>2</sup> He spoke of the 'disquieting signs of a possible divergence of policy between ourselves and the Russians in regard to the Balkan countries, and in particular towards Greece.' The Prime Minister explained that we had already suggested to the Russians a practical arrangement. Lord Halifax—who had not mentioned this fact—now found the State Department worried that we had not consulted them before putting the proposal to the Soviet Government. The Prime Minister telegraphed to Lord Halifax on June 8 that there was no question of spheres of influence. 'We all have to act together, but some one must be playing the hand . . . no fate could be worse for any country than to be subjected in these times to decisions reached by triangular or quadrangular telegraphing.' The President replied on June 11 that 'the military responsible government in any given territory will inevitably make decisions required by military developments,' but that 'the natural tendency for such decisions to extend to other than military fields would be strengthened by an agreement of the type suggested.' The President

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's note, see Churchill, VI, 63-4. On June 7 Mr. Eden submitted a memorandum on Russian intentions in the Balkans. The memorandum distinguished between the 'communisation' of the Balkans and the spread of Russian interests in the area. The Russians, under the influence of victory, were reviving their traditional policy of establishing governments in the Balkans subservient to Russian demands, but there was as yet no evidence of a deliberate attempt at communisation. We were indeed ourselves responsible for the existing situation in which communist-led movements were the most powerful elements in Yugoslavia and Greece. The Foreign Office considered that, since the Russians had rejected our proposals for confederations in south-east Europe, and since neither we nor they could give up an interest in the Balkans as a whole, our only feasible plan was to maintain our position in Greece and Turkey, encourage friendship between these two countries, and do what we could to spread our influence elsewhere without directly challenging the Russians.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's messages to the President and Lord Halifax, and the President's reply, see Churchill, VI, 64-6.

thought that arrangements should be made 'to establish consultative machinery to dispel misunderstanding and restrain the tendency towards the development of exclusive spheres.'

The Prime Minister was unwilling to accept these American suspicions of anything like a return to the doctrine of a balance of power. He replied at once that he was much concerned at the President's message. A consultative committee would be 'a mere obstruction, always overridden in any case of emergency by direct interchanges' between the President and himself or between them and Stalin. Mr. Churchill suggested giving the plan a three months' trial. Although the State Department sent an official reply in the terms of the President's message, the President agreed to the proposal for a three months' trial on condition that we made it clear that we were 'not establishing any post-war spheres of influence.'<sup>1</sup>

In spite of his acceptance of a three months' trial, the President remained uneasy. Mr. Hull was entirely unconvinced, and seems to have persuaded the President to raise the question again, and to say, in a message of June 22, that the United States Government were especially disturbed because they had been consulted only after we had made the proposal to the Russians. The Prime Minister then gave the President a longer explanation of his policy.<sup>2</sup> The President sent a friendly answer, but the Russians now saw a tactical advantage for themselves in the American unwillingness to regard Greece as temporarily within the sphere of British initiative. Mr. Eden had told M. Gusev on June 19 of the President's approval and of our hope that the Russians would agree to the plan. M. Gusev answered in a letter of June 30 that, in view of the American doubts, the Soviet Government thought it necessary to consider the matter further, and were themselves taking it up with the United States.

The Prime Minister minuted somewhat angrily: 'Does this mean that all we had settled with the Russians now goes down through the pedantic interference of the United States?' Mr. Churchill tried again to get the acceptance of his plan. He telegraphed to Stalin on July 12 that, although the Americans had agreed to the plan, Stalin himself seemed to find difficulties in it. The Prime Minister asked whether Stalin would not accept a three months' trial. Stalin answered that since the Americans had doubts about the plan, it would be better to await their views.<sup>3</sup>

On this same day, however, the United States Government had told the Russians that they accepted the plan on a three months' basis but that they did not want it to lead to a division of the Balkans into

<sup>1</sup> For the text of these exchanges, see Churchill, VI, 66-7.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's message, see Churchill, VI, 67-8.

<sup>3</sup> For the exchange of telegrams with Stalin, see Churchill, VI, 69-71.



spheres of influence or to prejudice the efforts to direct Allied policy along lines of collaboration. The British Embassy at Washington does not appear to have been told of this reply until July 25. Sir R. I. Campbell<sup>1</sup> then reported it to the Foreign Office. Meanwhile the Russians had sent a mission to E.L.A.S.<sup>2</sup> in Greece without previous consultation with the British Government. Mr. Eden had protested strongly to M. Gusev about this action, and did not wish to discuss any general agreement until the question of the Russian mission had been settled.

## (iv)

*The surrender of Roumania: the question of the Bulgarian armistice: extension of Russian control in southeast Europe.*

The Prime Minister's proposal was thus left aside for a time, but soon reappeared in a somewhat different form. Finland asked the Russians for terms on August 25, 1944. The Russians opened an offensive in Roumania on August 20. Three days later King Michael carried out a *coup d'état* against the collaborationist government of General Antonescu and at once began to surrender.<sup>3</sup> On September 12 a Roumanian delegation, headed by a Communist, signed a formal armistice agreement in Moscow. The Roumanian surrender was made to the United Nations, but the preamble stated that the implementation of the terms was entrusted to the control of the Soviet High Command acting on behalf of the Allied Powers. The Allied Control Commission was also described as working under the general direction of this Command. The terms thus perpetuated the Prime Minister's plan for a temporary division of spheres of influence; the Russians would certainly use the wording of the armistice to justify them in disregarding American views on joint consultation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> British Minister at Washington.

<sup>2</sup> See below, chapter XVIII.

<sup>3</sup> A new government, formed under General Săteanu, was primarily military in composition, but included representatives of the four main political parties.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout the latter half of 1943 the British Government had received a number of 'peace-feelers' from Roumanian sources. They had mentioned these approaches to the Americans and Russians, and had agreed at the Moscow Conference to consider only an offer by a duly authorised emissary to sign an unconditional surrender to the three principal Allies. Other approaches were made in February and March, 1944. The Roumanians were then told that, if they waited to surrender until an Allied force could protect them, they would have contributed nothing to the Allied victory, and that they must assist in an Allied invasion of the Balkans, and not merely take advantage of it. The Roumanians would not risk German hostility, and, although discussions with them had drifted on, they had had no result. Between the end of April and early June, 1944, there had been a sharp exchange of messages between the Prime Minister and M. Molotov over an unfounded Russian allegation that a British mission had been sent secretly to Roumania 'for purposes unknown to the Soviet Government.' Even after Sir A. Clark Kerr had shown that these charges were unfounded, M. Molotov made no apology for the offensive tone of his enquiry.

The Bulgarians had also offered to surrender, and the circumstances in which this surrender took place were again, from the British point of view, disquieting. On August 26 the Bulgarian Government<sup>1</sup> (after sending an emissary to Cairo) announced that they had decided to adopt a policy of complete neutrality, and had therefore presented a note to the German Legation requesting the withdrawal of German troops from Bulgarian territory. The Secretary of State then asked the Soviet Government not to encourage the Bulgarians to think that the Allies would accept a change to neutrality. The Russians answered by opening a violent press and radio campaign against the Bulgarian Government, but on August 29 informed the British Government that they did not wish to take part officially in the consideration of terms of surrender for Bulgaria since they were not at war with her.

Meanwhile a new Bulgarian Government was formed. On September 4 this Government repeated the statement that Bulgaria would follow a policy of neutrality. A day later—without any previous consultation with the western Powers—M. Molotov announced that the Soviet Government intended to declare war on Bulgaria. A Russian army invaded the country; the new Government was overthrown by a communist *coup d'état*, and was succeeded by an administration predominantly communist, which asked the Russians for an armistice and declared war on Germany. The Soviet Government then proposed that the armistice should be negotiated not in Cairo, where the preliminary Bulgarian overtures had been made, but in Moscow. The Foreign Office refused Moscow, and the Russians suggested Ankara. They also asked that the armistice should be signed by a Russian general; that Bulgaria should be given co-belligerent status; that the Allied Control Commission, as in Roumania and Finland, should be under Russian direction, and that the British and American representatives should act merely as observers and liaison officers.

The Foreign Office view was that we could agree to hold the negotiations at Ankara, and to a double signature of the armistice, i.e. General Wilson would sign for us (and, if they agreed, for the Americans), and a Russian general on behalf of the Soviet Government. We should probably have to agree to Russian chairmanship of the Allied Control Commission, but we should insist upon an equal share for the Americans and ourselves with the Russians in the actual work and responsibility of the Commission. We could not allow Bulgaria

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<sup>1</sup> King Boris of Bulgaria had died in August, 1943; his son, King Simeon, was a boy of six, and a Regency Council had been formed under the direction of King Boris' brother, Prince Cyril.

co-belligerent status, and we should have to insist upon the evacuation of Greek and Yugoslav territory by Bulgarian troops as a preliminary condition of any discussions.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Eden was at this time with the Prime Minister at Quebec. They telegraphed on September 17 that, although the Soviet action was 'exasperating and disingenuous,' we had recognised that the Russians should take the lead in Bulgaria if they accepted our claim to do so in Greece. On this condition we might agree to their proposals other than the grant of co-belligerency. We might also try to extend this arrangement for a division of influence to the Balkans as a whole. The Americans would probably dislike the proposal, but the Prime Minister would speak to the President about it. On his return to England, however, Mr. Eden came round to the Foreign Office view that we ought not to offer a 'bargain' over Bulgaria. We could allow Soviet predominance in Finland and Roumania, but we could not do so in a country which bordered on Greece, Yugoslavia, and Turkey. The Prime Minister accepted this view.

After the withdrawal of Roumania and Bulgaria from the war, the Russians were free to enter Yugoslavia, and Marshal Tito's attitude towards his British patrons at once became more aggressive. The Soviet Government had already signed a treaty with Czechoslovakia,<sup>2</sup> and Hungary was prevented from changing sides only by German

<sup>1</sup> See also below, p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> The British Government recognised in December, 1939, as representative of the Czechoslovak nation, a Czechoslovak National Committee formed under the presidency of M. Benes. After the collapse of France this Committee, and most of the Czechoslovak troops who had been fighting in France, escaped to Great Britain. The Committee then declared itself the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia, and was recognised as such by the British Government. In August, 1942, the British Government informed M. Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, that they did not recognise any territorial changes effected with regard to Czechoslovakia 'in and since 1938.'

The Soviet Government, on the other hand, had accepted the German annexation of Bohemia and Moravia and the creation of a separate Slovak Republic. They did not change this policy until after the German attack on the U.S.S.R. They then recognised the Provisional Government as the national Government of Czechoslovakia, but Dr. Benes—warned by the Russian use of Polish Communists—was afraid of the possibility that similar use might be made of Czechoslovakian Communists in exile in the U.S.S.R. He therefore accepted in December, 1943, a treaty of mutual assistance and guarantee between Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R. M. Benes first mentioned to the Foreign Office in May, 1943, the negotiations with the Soviet Government for an agreement. The Foreign Office did not regard the conclusion of the treaty as opportune, since it was likely to exacerbate Czecho-Polish relations, and make the restoration of Polish-Soviet relations more difficult. Furthermore the British Government had—or thought they had—an agreement with the Russians (made with M. Molotov while he was in London in 1942) that neither Power would conclude without previous mutual discussion a treaty with any of the smaller Allies. The purpose of this 'self-denying ordinance', from the British side, was to avoid competitive bargaining for the support of these smaller States and to maintain post-war collaboration between the three Great Powers in all parts of Europe. In view of Russian insistence, however, the British Government gave up the 'self-denying ordinance' and acquiesced in the Russo-Czechoslovak treaty if it included a protocol providing for the adherence of any third party bordering on the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia which had been the object of German aggression during the war.

In May, 1944, M. Benes signed another agreement with the U.S.S.R. providing for the transfer of civil administration in liberated Czechoslovak territory to the Czechoslovak Government.

control.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile in Poland the Russians were working openly for the establishment of a puppet government, and their attitude towards the Polish revolt in Warsaw had brought about a serious crisis with the western Powers.<sup>2</sup> In other matters also they seemed to be refusing to cooperate with the western Powers. They were trying to coerce the Iranian Government into granting them exclusive rights to oil concessions in the northern provinces of the country.<sup>3</sup> At the Dumbarton Oaks Conference they brought forward a demand for separate representation, in the new World Organisation, for each of the sixteen constituent Republics of the Soviet Union, and were insisting upon a right of veto for the Great Powers in the proposed Security Council.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the latter part of 1943 the Hungarians, like the Roumanians, wanted to get out of the war, and, at the same time, to avoid both German reprisals and a Russian occupation. The British Government treated the Hungarian approaches as they treated those from Roumania, i.e. they informed the Russians and Americans of them, and made it clear to the Hungarians that they could not surrender only to the Western Powers, and that they must make some positive contribution to the Allied victory. The German occupation of Hungary in March, 1944, had put an end for a time to the Hungarian attempts to change sides, but in the early autumn of 1944, the Regent and the Hungarian Government realised that a Russian occupation was certain. They tried to mitigate its severity by an early surrender. On September 22 General Nadoy came to Italy in a Hungarian aeroplane with a message from Admiral Horthy authorising him to ask for an armistice. The Foreign Office instructed the British Ambassadors in Washington and Moscow to inform the United States and Soviet Ambassadors of this approach, and to say that General Nadoy seemed to be a suitable channel. The United States Government agreed, but the Soviet Government replied that they did not regard General Nadoy as a duly authorised representative. On October 6 M. Molotov told Sir A. Clark Kerr that a Hungarian mission was in Moscow with authority to conduct negotiations. The Hungarian Government offered to join in fighting the Germans. They asked for the occupation of Budapest by Soviet troops, and also put forward a request that Roumanian forces should not cross the frontier established in 1940. The Soviet Government proposed to reply that Hungarian forces and civilian officials must be withdrawn from Czechoslovak, Yugoslav and Roumanian territories occupied since 1937. The British and United States Governments approved these terms, and agreed that negotiations should take place in Moscow. The Hungarian Government accepted the terms, but on October 16 the Germans carried out a second *coup* at Budapest and established a new puppet government which denounced the armistice negotiations. Hungary therefore suffered a Russian military invasion. A provisional government, established with Russian support in the east of the country, signed an armistice on January 20, 1945, but fighting continued in Budapest until mid-February and in western Hungary until mid-April. See also below, pp. 479-80.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter XV.

<sup>3</sup> See below, Chapter XV.

<sup>4</sup> See below, Chapter XXVI.

## CHAPTER XV

British attempts to secure help for the Poles in the Warsaw insurrection: visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Moscow, October 9-18, 1944: further unsuccessful British negotiations to bring about a Russo-Polish settlement: Russian demands for an oil concession in Iran

### (i)

*Formation of the Russian-sponsored Polish Committee of National Liberation: M. Mikolajczyk's visit to Moscow: outbreak of the Warsaw insurrection.*

AFTER the sudden end to the discussions between M. Mikolajczyk and M. Lebedev in London<sup>1</sup> the Foreign Office were afraid that, unless the Poles took some positive step towards meeting the Russian demands, especially with regard to the changes in the Government, the Russians might just go ahead with their own plans. M. Mikolajczyk asked whether we would propose to the Russians that he should visit Moscow for a personal discussion with Stalin. The Foreign Office thought that another direct proposal by us to the Russians would be useless, but that we could support a Polish suggestion.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister took the chance of a message to Stalin on July 20 about the resumption of Arctic convoys to say that he had avoided any discussion of the Polish problem because he trusted Stalin to come to terms with the Underground Movement if it fought really hard against the Germans. Stalin replied on July 23 that with the advance of the Soviet troops the question of administration on Polish territory had arisen in a practical form.<sup>3</sup> The Russians did not wish to set up their own administration, and had made contact with the newly formed Polish Committee of National Liberation. Stalin said that the Russians had found no other forces in Poland capable of setting up an administration. He described the 'so-called Underground organisations' directed by the Polish

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 289-90.

<sup>2</sup> President Roosevelt had made a direct suggestion to Stalin, but Stalin had answered that M. Mikolajczyk's views did not suggest that any progress would result from a visit by him to Moscow.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. the Russians had now crossed the Curzon line. They refused to acknowledge as 'Polish territory' the area east of this line.

Government in London as without influence. He said that he would receive M. Mikolajczyk, but that the latter would do better to address himself to the Committee of National Liberation.

The Committee of National Liberation to which Stalin referred had been set up—as M. Mikolajczyk had forecast early in February—by the National Council of the Homeland on July 21.<sup>1</sup> The Committee of Liberation, in a manifesto to the Polish people, claimed full legal authority in virtue of the Polish constitution of 1921, and referred to the London Government as an ‘illegal and self-styled authority’ which was ‘driving Poland to a new disaster.’ On July 27 the Soviet Government published an agreement with the Committee of Liberation as ‘the only lawful temporary organ of executive power.’ The Polish Government in London, on the other hand, described the members of the Committee as usurpers representing only a communist minority.

After some hesitation M. Mikolajczyk agreed to meet the National Committee.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister therefore telegraphed to Stalin on July 25 that M. Mikolajczyk hoped for a full and friendly conversation with Stalin, and that he was going to Moscow with the full support of all his colleagues in the Polish Government which we continued to recognise. Mr. Churchill also telegraphed to the President that we must not desert the Polish Government in London. Mr. Churchill suggested that the President might send a message to Stalin in favour of a united Polish government. The President agreed to do so, and, on Mr. Eden’s suggestion, to send also a message of encouragement to M. Mikolajczyk. On July 27 Mr. Churchill repeated to Stalin his hopes of a settlement; he pointed out the seriousness of a situation in which the Russians and the western democracies recognised different Polish Governments.

The Polish Ministers left London on July 26.<sup>3</sup> They saw Stalin and M. Molotov on the night of August 3–4. The meeting was friendly, and the Poles were impressed by Stalin, though they thought that he was ill-informed about the Underground Movement. Stalin listened with good humour to the Polish arguments that they should be given Vilna and Lwow, but argued that with East Prussia (except Königsberg), and with a frontier on the Oder including Stettin<sup>4</sup> as a port, Poland would be strong and of a good size, and that Breslau was a good exchange for Lwow. Stalin said that the question of frontiers was not immediate, and could be settled after M. Mikolajczyk had

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 290, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister had described the Poles who were collaborating with the Russians as neither quislings nor communists. M. Mikolajczyk said that they were nonentities or persons with bad records, and all of them communist agents.

<sup>3</sup> MM. Romer and Grabski accompanied M. Mikolajczyk. The three Ministers went to and from Moscow by way of Teheran.

<sup>4</sup> The mention of Stettin took the Poles (and the Foreign Office) by surprise.



come to terms with the Committee. He did not wish to interfere with these negotiations between Poles.

M. Mikolajczyk had three meetings with the Committee. One of the features of the meetings was the emergence of a M. Bierut, chairman of the National Council in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> M. Bierut asked for a new Polish Government of eighteen Ministers, fourteen of whom would come from the Committee, and only four (including M. Mikolajczyk as Prime Minister, and M. Grabski) from London. The President would be replaced, and the 1935 constitution abolished in favour of the constitution of 1921. M. Mikolajczyk said that he would have to consult his colleagues in London. Before his return to London M. Mikolajczyk had another friendly meeting with Stalin. Stalin said that he had no intention of 'communising' Poland.<sup>2</sup>

Stalin telegraphed on August 8 to the Prime Minister that the meetings had been of value, and that he hoped that the affair 'would go better in future.' The Prime Minister sent a copy of this message to Mr. Roosevelt with the comment that Stalin's mood was 'more agreeable than we have sometimes met,' and that we should persevere in our efforts. A new and sinister factor, however, had come into the situation. A general rising had broken out in Warsaw on August 1, and the Russian attitude towards it shewed how little their expressions of good will were worth. The Polish Government in London, the Underground leaders in Poland, and the British Government could not avoid the conclusion that the Russians were well satisfied to allow the Polish Underground forces, alone and unaided, to become discredited as well as defeated in a hopeless struggle against the Germans.

The Warsaw rising, in which 40,000 armed men took part, was not an unplanned attack. The Polish Government and Underground Movement had plans ready for a general rising, and had in fact asked for British assistance. They had been told that we were too far away to meet their requests, and that a rising would be effective only if it took place in agreement and cooperation with the Russians.<sup>3</sup> The Polish plans were ready before the Russians, in a rapid advance, reached the outskirts of Warsaw on July 29. On this day Moscow

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<sup>1</sup> M. Bierut was unknown to the Polish Ministers, and would not disclose his real name. He was later identified as a Pole named Krasnodewski who had been imprisoned in Poland as a Communist and a Soviet agent, and exchanged in 1927 for a Polish agent in the U.S.S.R. He was said to have taken part in the Spanish civil war.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin also said that he would do 'everything possible and impossible' to ensure that Germany could not fight a war of revenge. When M. Mikolajczyk mentioned a statement by a captured German officer that Germany might turn communist after the war, Stalin said that communism was 'no more fit for Germany than a saddle for a cow.'

<sup>3</sup> On July 26 the Polish Government again informed the British Government that everything was ready for a rising in Warsaw, and asked for certain specified forms of British assistance. They were told once more that it was not practicable—on operational grounds—for us to meet their requests.

radio broadcast an appeal from the Union of Polish Patriots to the population of Warsaw, and asserting that the time had come for direct and decisive action in the streets and houses of the city. In view of this broadcast, and of the approach of the Russian armies, General Bor-Komorowski, the Polish Commander-in-Chief in Poland, ordered an insurrection on August 1. The Russians were then only 10 kilometres from the city and the Germans had begun to evacuate it. General Bor-Komorowski was, however, unable to get into touch with the Soviet military authorities before issuing his orders.<sup>1</sup>

## (ii)

*Soviet refusal to assist the Poles in Warsaw or to allow American aircraft carrying supplies to Warsaw to land on Russian airfields: British protests to the Soviet Government: belated Russian acceptance of the Anglo-American demands: the end of the Warsaw insurrection.*

M. Mikolajczyk had said to M. Molotov on July 31 that before leaving London he had discussed with the Polish military authorities the details of the rising which was to take place in Warsaw and the need of airborne supplies. He had not mentioned a date, since the decision had been left to General Bor-Komorowski. On August 2 M. Mikolajczyk spoke to M. Molotov, and, on the following day to Stalin, about the rising, and asked for Russian help. Stalin said that he would consider the matter, but gave the impression that he thought the rising premature. On August 4 Mr. Churchill telegraphed to Stalin that we were dropping supplies into Warsaw, and that the Poles had told us that they had appealed for Russian aid. Stalin replied on August 5 that the information communicated by the Poles to the Prime Minister was 'greatly exaggerated' and did not 'inspire confidence.' He argued that the Polish Home Army consisted of 'a few detachments which they incorrectly call divisions,' and was without artillery, aircraft and tanks. Stalin could not imagine how such

<sup>1</sup> I have not dealt here with the question whether—as the Russians asserted—the Poles had not been asked by them to begin the rising at once, or whether—as the Poles asserted—the Russians had definitely asked for an immediate rising, and had then given up their attack on Warsaw not because they were unable to carry it out but because they wanted the destruction of the Polish Home Army in Warsaw. The Poles wanted to liberate Warsaw for themselves, and to have a Polish administration at work before the Russians entered the city; hence they needed to be in control at least twelve hours before the Russian entry. These considerations, however, do not invalidate their claim that they were acting on a definite appeal from the Russians. The question is fully discussed in *Grand Strategy*, V, ch. IX, section iii.

detachments could capture Warsaw, for the defence of which the Germans were using four tank divisions.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office thought that an answer should be sent to Stalin pointing out that we had always said publicly that we would help anyone who was fighting the Germans. In accordance with this promise we had sent help to Stalin's friends in Yugoslavia and Greece who, like the French Resistance forces, did not have aircraft or tanks or, presumably, artillery. The Foreign Office therefore drafted a message from the Prime Minister to Stalin that a deliberate refusal to send assistance would cause serious misunderstanding in Poland and elsewhere. In view, however, of M. Mikolajczyk's hopeful report of his meetings with Stalin, the message was not sent.

At this time the British authorities had little information about the position outside Warsaw. The Germans claimed to have annihilated a Soviet armoured force, and the Russians seemed to have been checked. On August 8 M. Kwapinski, Deputy Polish Prime Minister, came to the Foreign Office with a memorandum containing messages from the Poles in Warsaw that the Russians were doing nothing to help them, and were disarming the Polish Home Army elsewhere as soon as the fighting was over, and that they were arresting and even shooting the Polish administrative officials. M. Kwapinski asked that the British Government should issue a declaration that the Underground Army were entitled to the rights of regular belligerents. Mr. Eden said that we could not yet assume an absence of good will on the Russian side, and that the Russian army appeared to have been held up. We had wanted to send more technical supplies to Warsaw, but the operational difficulties were great. Mr. Eden thought that a purely British declaration about the status of the Home Army would be useless, and might be misinterpreted by the Russians; we should, however, be willing to join the Russians in a public statement.

At his final interview with M. Mikolajczyk on August 9 Stalin promised Russian help for Warsaw,<sup>2</sup> but no help arrived. On August 12 the Poles appealed to the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt for assistance. Mr. Churchill told Stalin of a Polish message describing the desperate situation and the lack of outside support, and asked whether he (Stalin) could not send further help.<sup>3</sup> He also suggested

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<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's message and of Stalin's reply, see Churchill, VI, 115-6.

<sup>2</sup> In view of this promise, and of messages transmitted through London for communication to the Polish headquarters in Warsaw, the Prime Minister, on August 10, in his telegram of thanks to Stalin for his message of August 8, said that he was glad to hear that the Soviet Government were sending supplies. He also mentioned the attempts of Polish airmen flying from Bari to drop munitions over Warsaw. For the attempts to send supplies from Italy, see *Grand Strategy*, V, pp. 372-6. The Prime Minister left London for Italy on August 9. He returned on August 28, and left for the Quebec Conference on September 5.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, VI, 116-7.

to Mr. Eden that—as a more informal approach—he (Mr. Eden) should send a message through M. Molotov pointing out the unfortunate consequences which would follow a belief that the Russians had deserted the Poles. Sir A. Clark Kerr was therefore instructed on August 15 to approach the Soviet Government again if they had not begun to send supplies to Warsaw.

The chances of a favourable reply did not seem great. The Moscow press was putting the responsibility for the rising on the Polish Government in London. At President Roosevelt's request, Mr. Harriman wrote to M. Molotov asking that American aircraft should be allowed to use Soviet landing fields in order to run a 'shuttle service' over Warsaw from Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> M. Vyshinsky replied on August 15 that the Soviet Government could not allow these facilities and that the rising in Warsaw was merely the 'work of adventurers.'

In view of this statement the two Ambassadors asked at once for an interview with M. Molotov. M. Molotov was out of Moscow, so they saw M. Vyshinsky. M. Vyshinsky defended his words, though he did not explain why Stalin had told M. Mikolajczyk that he would send help to the Poles. The Ambassadors argued that, even if the rebellion had been premature, the Poles were fighting Germans, but M. Vyshinsky would not change his view.

The Secretary of State approved of Sir A. Clark Kerr's action, and asked him to try to see Stalin, or, at all events, M. Molotov in order to let them know our anxiety about the effect of their attitude not only on Polish-Soviet but on Anglo-Soviet relations. Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman had a long meeting with M. Molotov in the evening of August 17.<sup>2</sup> They repeated their representations in favour of helping the Poles. M. Molotov was unmoved; he returned again to the theses that the rising was the work of 'bankrupt Polish adventurers' and that the Polish press and wireless in London were using it as an opportunity for slandering the Soviet Government. He admitted a change of policy since Stalin had promised to send assistance to the Poles, but said that the change had occurred after the Soviet Government had discovered the real nature of the rising. Stalin had already (August 16) telegraphed to the Prime Minister

<sup>1</sup> In February, 1944, after much delay the United States Air Force had obtained permission to use bases in Russian territory for 'shuttle flights' in bombing Germany. After more delay, the bases had been established in the Ukraine. The R.A.F. had no arrangement of this kind, and no ground organisation behind the Russian front.

<sup>2</sup> On the evening of August 16 M. Vyshinsky had read a statement to Mr. Harriman that the Soviet Government could not object to British or American aircraft dropping arms in the region of Warsaw, but that they 'decidedly objected' to such aircraft landing in Soviet territory. (For the text of this statement, and of Stalin's message of August 16, see Churchill, VI, 118.) M. Molotov wrote in similar terms in answer to a letter which Sir A. Clark Kerr sent to him on receiving Mr. Eden's instructions.

that the Soviet Government felt that they must dissociate themselves from the 'Warsaw adventure.'

Mr. Eden sent for M. Gusev in the afternoon of August 18 to say that the British Government were gravely concerned over this message and the Soviet refusal to allow American aircraft to use Russian airfields. Two days later (at Mr. Churchill's suggestion, and in response to another appeal from M. Mikolajczyk) the Prime Minister and the President sent a joint message to Stalin urging him either to drop supplies in Warsaw or to help Allied aircraft to do so.<sup>1</sup> M. Mikolajczyk told Mr. Eden on August 21 that the Soviet Air Force had been dropping leaflets on Warsaw saying that the city would soon be relieved, and that the leaders of the rising would be punished. The Poles again asked whether the British Government would make a declaration on the question of belligerent rights for the rebels. They said that the Germans were quoting a Tass agency statement in justification of their intention to treat prisoners as *francs-tireurs*.

The War Cabinet agreed to consider a declaration, but before it was settled an answer reached London, on the night of August 23-24, from Stalin to the joint appeal from the President and the Prime Minister. The answer merely repeated in stronger terms the charges that the rising was the work of a 'group of criminals.' The Prime Minister considered it necessary to reply to this refusal, but the President thought that nothing could be done unless the Russians allowed the use of their airfields.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill, however, telegraphed Mr. Eden a proposal for another Anglo-American message suggesting that American aircraft might land on Soviet territory without enquiry from the Russians about their action on the way. We could not form an opinion about the leaders who had begun an insurrection which was certainly called for repeatedly by Moscow radio, but our sympathies were with the 'almost unarmed people' (here Mr. Churchill was using Stalin's own words) whose special faith had led them to attack German guns, tanks, and aircraft.

The Prime Minister thought that, if Stalin made no reply, we should send the aircraft.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Eden agreed; he had already suggested to Mr. Winant that American aeroplanes should 'gate-crash' on Russian territory. Mr. Eden transmitted the Prime Minister's message at once to President Roosevelt. The President answered on August 26 that, in view of Stalin's refusal to allow the use of Russian bases, and of current American conversations about the use of other such bases, he did not think it advisable for him to join in the

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<sup>1</sup> For the text of these messages and of Stalin's reply, see Churchill, VI, 119-20.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill had sent to the President some eye-witness accounts of the situation in Warsaw. See Churchill, VI, 120-3.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the proposed message and of the President's reply, see Churchill, VI, 123-4.

proposed message, though he did not object to the despatch of the message by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Eden saw the Polish Ministers again on August 28. They told him that the position in Warsaw was now almost hopeless. Mr. Eden explained the President's views, and the impossibility of arranging a large expedition from Great Britain to drop supplies, though he promised to arrange a meeting between the British and Polish Chiefs of Air Staff to discuss the question. He also said that he intended to speak to M. Gusev about the arrests of officers of the Polish Underground Movement and civil administration,<sup>1</sup> and that we were awaiting an answer from the United States Government about a joint declaration on belligerent rights, but that in any case we should publish our own declaration on August 29.<sup>2</sup>

The War Cabinet decided on September 4 to send another message to the Soviet Government. Sir A. Clark Kerr was therefore instructed to tell M. Molotov that it was becoming generally known that material help could not be sent to Warsaw owing to the Russian refusal to allow American aircraft to land on their airfields. If the Poles were now overwhelmed, the shock to British opinion would be incalculable. The War Cabinet regarded the Soviet refusal as at variance with the spirit of Allied cooperation, and made another appeal to the Soviet Government. The Prime Minister sent a copy of this appeal to the President with the suggestion that he should authorise the United States Air Force to drop supplies on Warsaw, and to land, if necessary, on Russian airfields without the formal consent of the Russian authorities.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet Government did not reply to the British message until the evening of September 9. The reply was, in Sir A. Clark Kerr's words, a 'climb-down,' though it included another denunciation of the 'Warsaw adventure.' The Soviet Government said that, if the British Government were convinced of the value of dropping supplies on Warsaw, and insisted upon the Soviet Command organising such assistance jointly with the British and Americans, they would agree to do so. A large American operation for the dropping of supplies was carried out on September 18, and Polish volunteer crews continued to fly from Bari. The Russians also continued to drop supplies,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden carried out this promise on August 31. No reply was received until September 20. The Russians then said that the Polish allegations were untrue.

<sup>2</sup> The United States Government agreed with the issue of simultaneous parallel declarations. The British declaration was published on the night of August 29-30.

<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister also telegraphed to the President a copy of the telegram sent on August 22 by the women of Warsaw to the Pope. Mr. Churchill was much moved by this tragic appeal. He considered whether he and the President might send a joint telegram to Stalin that, since he had not helped the Poles, they proposed to cut off the convoys to Russia. The Foreign Office thought that a threat of this kind would only do harm to the Poles. The Prime Minister came to the same conclusion.



and to provide air support for the Poles. They resumed their attack in the suburbs of Warsaw, but, on October 2—when the Poles were near to surrender—refused to agree to another American air operation. On October 3 General Bor-Komorowski was compelled to surrender after a sixty-three days' fight against overwhelming German forces.<sup>1</sup>

## (iii)

*Visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Moscow, October 9-18, 1944: further unsuccessful British attempts to bring about a Russo-Polish settlement: Soviet recognition of the Polish National Committee in Lublin as a Provisional Government.*

The temporary arrangement put forward in June by the Prime Minister for a division of spheres of action in the Balkans now took on a different appearance. The Russians were, in fact, exercising complete control wherever their armies advanced. Owing to the American rejection of the Prime Minister's strategical plans, the western Allies had deprived themselves of any opportunity of sharing in the control of south-eastern Europe outside Greece. The Russians had not yet begun to impose entirely communist régimes in the areas under their control, but from their attitude towards the Warsaw insurrection, and their general policy in Poland, and from the fact that their supporters everywhere came from the Communists, they were likely within a short time to eliminate non-Communists from the left-wing coalitions.

The Prime Minister was much disturbed at this situation. He regarded it as threatening the future of Anglo-Soviet cooperation upon which British post-war policy was being planned. The Americans seemed as yet unaware of the gravity of the danger, and more inclined to suspect British motives in Greece and Italy than to face the possibility of a new Russian imperialism. In addition Mr. Roosevelt was occupied for the time with the presidential election, and

<sup>1</sup> The surrender of General Bor-Komorowski made it impossible for the Russian-sponsored Polish National Committee to carry out their declared intention of bringing him to trial for the 'crime' of starting the insurrection. Sir A. Clark Kerr had been instructed to make very strong representations to the Soviet Government if the Committee appeared likely to carry out their threat.

The Prime Minister spoke in the House of Commons on October 5 about the heroic action of the rebels. He also sent a personal letter to M. Mikołajczyk expressing his deep sorrow at our inability to provide more effective assistance. A broadcast from Warsaw, heard in London, before the inevitable surrender, spoke of the 'terrible injustice suffered by the Polish nation.'

anxious not to commit himself to any policy which might raise criticism in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister therefore decided to try to convince Stalin, in personal discussion, of the genuineness of the British desire for co-operation. Mr. Churchill could go to Moscow with considerable bargaining power. The Western Powers, as well as the Russians, had won remarkable victories. A total collapse of Germany now seemed possible before the end of the year. The Anglo-American armies had entered German territory on September 11, and might reach Berlin before the Russians.<sup>2</sup>

During the Quebec Conference the Prime Minister and the President had been considering another meeting of heads of governments but the President could not leave the United States until after the election. The Prime Minister suggested on September 27 to Stalin that he or Mr. Eden should come to Moscow in October. Stalin sent a friendly answer.<sup>3</sup> The President was at first doubtful; he then agreed that Mr. Harriman should participate as his 'observer' and return to Washington to report on the meetings. The Prime Minister was a little guarded in his reply. He said he was sure that the President would not want to prevent private conversations between himself and Stalin, or between Mr. Eden and M. Molotov. The President did not disagree, though he made it clear both to the Prime Minister and Stalin that he regarded the visit as a preliminary to a tripartite meeting.<sup>4</sup>

The British Ministers reached Moscow on October 9 and left on October 18. The greater part of the political discussions were on the Polish question, but at his first talk with Stalin on October 9 and before anything had been said about the Bulgarian armistice the Prime Minister suggested informally, and Stalin agreed, that the Russians might have a 90 per cent predominance in Roumania and a 75 per cent predominance in Bulgaria; Great Britain would have a 90 per cent predominance in Greece; Hungary and Yugoslavia would be shared on a '50-50' basis. At a meeting with Mr. Eden on October 10 M. Molotov asked that the Russians should be allowed a 75 per cent predominance in Hungary. Mr. Eden said he would like to think over the suggestion. He then raised the question of the

<sup>1</sup> The President was already alarmed at public criticism of his acceptance of the Morgenthau plan (see below, pp. 471-4).

<sup>2</sup> In July the Russian press had contrasted the great Russian advances with the small Allied gains in Normandy. The success of the Allies soon made this kind of criticism ridiculous, and the Soviet press began to emphasise the importance of Allied cooperation and of the Anglo-Soviet treaty.

<sup>3</sup> Sir A. Clark Kerr telegraphed on October 2 that the Russians in fact welcomed the Prime Minister's visit.

<sup>4</sup> For this exchange of correspondence, see Churchill, VI, 186-191.

Bulgarian armistice. He agreed to the consideration of the terms in Moscow, and M. Molotov accepted the British proposal for a double signature. An argument followed about the formula regarding the British and American shares in the activities of the Control Commission after the end of the war with Germany. M. Molotov reverted to the talk about percentages, and asked that the Russians should have a 90 per cent share in Bulgaria. Mr. Eden said that he was not concerned with percentages, but that the British Government wanted a larger share of responsibility than they had in Roumania. M. Molotov then suggested 75 per cent for Bulgaria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. On Mr. Eden's refusal of these figures M. Molotov proposed 90 per cent for Bulgaria, and 50 for Yugoslavia. Mr. Eden agreed to 75 per cent for Hungary, but insisted on a higher British figure for Bulgaria. Mr. Molotov then proposed, as his 'limit' of concession, 75 per cent as the Russian figure for Bulgaria, and 60 per cent for Yugoslavia. Mr. Eden said that he could not make this suggestion to the Prime Minister, who was greatly interested in Yugoslavia. He proposed 75 per cent for Hungary, 80 per cent for Bulgaria, and 50 per cent for Yugoslavia. Finally M. Molotov thought that Stalin would accept 75 per cent for Bulgaria and 60 per cent for Yugoslavia. Mr. Eden repeated that he did not care much about exact figures, but that Great Britain had a larger interest in Bulgaria than in Roumania.

In the afternoon of October 10 Mr. Eden and M. Molotov met again. M. Molotov now suggested 80 per cent for Hungary and Bulgaria, and 50 per cent for Yugoslavia. He meant by his figure for Bulgaria that until the German surrender the Allied control would work as in Roumania, that is to say, under Russian direction. After the surrender of Germany, British and American representatives would participate directly in the control. This principle was agreed.<sup>1</sup> The Russians had already accepted the British condition that Bulgarian troops should be withdrawn from Greece and Yugoslavia. Hence, after more bargaining over detail, the terms of the Bulgarian armistice were settled before the end of the conference. Meanwhile the Prime Minister had come to the conclusion that this rough percentage basis might be misunderstood. He drafted a letter—half appeal, half warning—to Stalin explaining the broad principles of British policy, but decided not to send it. In a message to the War Cabinet on October 12 he said that the figures were 'no more than a guide' for the 'immediate wartime future,' and did not commit the United States.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In spite of continued British protests, the Soviet authorities used this agreement to put severe restrictions upon the activities of the British and American representatives, and even refused to supply them with the Bulgarian currency necessary for the maintenance of their missions.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message and of the draft letter to Stalin, see Churchill, VI, 201-4.

Before the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had left for Moscow, they had persuaded the President of Poland—after difficult discussions—to agree to dismiss General Sosnkowski.<sup>1</sup> They regarded this step as necessary if they were to try to bring about an agreement between the London Poles and the Committee of National Liberation.<sup>2</sup> M. Mikolajczyk had come a long way towards accepting the proposals put forward by the Committee. He was willing to set up a government of members of the four parties in the existing Government and of the communist party. The latter—that is to say, the representatives of the National Committee—would be given more than one fifth of the seats. The Foreign Office did not think that there was much chance of getting an agreement on these terms. The Russians could easily find reasons for delay while they arrested the Underground leaders and broke up their organisation. We might insist that a rapid and equitable solution of the Polish problem was necessary in the interest of future Anglo-Russian cooperation, but the Russians had seen that, although the British Government and public opinion might become indignant for a time at the Russian treatment of the Poles, this indignation was never lasting.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden asked Stalin at their first meeting that M. Mikolajczyk, M. Romer, and M. Grabski should be invited to take part in the conversations on Poland. The Poles agreed to come,<sup>3</sup> and left London on the night of October 10–11. Meanwhile the British Ministers had explained to Stalin why British opinion was interested in a settlement; Stalin, on his side, assured Mr. Churchill that the Russian failure to relieve Warsaw had been due entirely to military reasons. The Prime Minister accepted this explanation, and Mr. Harriman spoke in similar terms of the view taken in the United States.

The first meeting on October 13 between the British, Russians, and Poles was inconclusive. Stalin—withdrawing his earlier concession that the settlement of the frontier question could be postponed—said that the Poles must begin by accepting the Curzon line.<sup>4</sup> M. Mikolajczyk repeated the Polish arguments against immediate acceptance, and the Prime Minister appealed to him to recognise that the British Government supported the Russian frontier claims because they

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the fact that General Sosnkowski was especially distrusted by the Soviet Government, and was opposing M. Mikolajczyk's policy, the British Government had reason to complain of statements by him blaming the Allied Command for not giving more assistance to the Poles in Warsaw.

<sup>2</sup> The Committee was now established at Lublin, and remained there until the Russians entered Warsaw in mid-January, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> They came to this decision before they received urgent messages from the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden that, if they refused the invitation, they would lose the last chance of a settlement.

<sup>4</sup> M. Molotov told M. Mikolajczyk that President Roosevelt had agreed to the Curzon line, but did not wish for the time to make public his agreement.

thought them justified. Later in the day the British Ministers and Stalin, with Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman, met the leaders of the National Committee. The Prime Minister was not impressed with them. He described them as 'inverted Quislings' who wanted to rule Poland; he told Stalin that he regarded them as 'only an expression of Soviet will.' Stalin appeared at the meeting to be concerned mainly to secure acceptance of the Curzon line (which the Committee readily conceded) and not to care much about the domestic ambitions of the Committee.

On the morning of October 14 the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden told M. Mikolajczyk and his colleagues that the Polish Government would never again have such a good opportunity of establishing their relations with the Russians. If matters went wrong through their fault, the Prime Minister would have to make a statement in Parliament shewing a great change in our attitude towards them. Mr. Churchill said that, if the frontier question were settled, the other problems would disappear, since the Russians would be able to make their Polish puppets 'toe the line.'

M. Mikolajczyk said that he could not accept the frontier decision without considering the views of his colleagues and of his supporters in Poland. Moreover the 'other' questions were also important; he could not safely agree to merge his Government with the Committee under Soviet control. The Prime Minister then argued strongly that the Great Powers had now spent blood and treasure for a second time in a generation in order to liberate Poland; they could not allow themselves to be drawn into a dispute for the sake of a Polish domestic quarrel. M. Mikolajczyk replied that he knew that the fate of Poland had been settled at Teheran, but that he was not without patriotic feeling. The matter was not solely a domestic quarrel between Poles, but a quarrel between Poland and the Soviet Union. He could not deal with the agents of the Soviet Union, since he would have no security for the future.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister said that the time was past when the Poles could afford the luxury of indulging their patriotic feeling. He warned M. Mikolajczyk again that, if he did not accept the Curzon line, we should have nothing more to do with him. What mattered was that M. Mikolajczyk and his friends would get a chance of helping to administer Poland instead of being swept aside and even 'liquidated.'

Mr. Eden pointed out that if M. Mikolajczyk accepted the Curzon line, he could count on British support in other matters. After further discussion upon a formula likely to be more acceptable to Polish opinion, the Prime Minister put forward a draft covering the western as well as the eastern frontiers of Poland, and containing an assurance

<sup>1</sup> Later in the discussion M. Mikolajczyk said that the Communists needed only to secure the Ministry of the Interior in order to get their way in Poland.

of the independent sovereign authority of the new government. The Prime Minister said that he would have to consult his colleagues in London about it, but that he was ready to ask Stalin whether he would accept it.

The Polish Ministers agreed to this proposal. Stalin also accepted it. The Polish Ministers, however, on October 15, insisted on the so-called 'line B' in Eastern Galicia<sup>1</sup>—i.e. the line leaving Lwow to Poland. The Prime Minister tried again to get this concession, but, as he had expected, Stalin would not agree to it. M. Mikolajczyk appeared willing to accept the loss of Lwow as inevitable, but said that he could not now agree publicly to the Curzon line. He suggested a return to the earlier proposal for a line of demarcation, with the difference that it would now follow the Curzon line. Stalin, however, refused anything less than the acceptance of the Curzon line as the frontier. Stalin said to the Prime Minister that he and M. Molotov were the only members of the Soviet Government who wanted to deal 'softly' with M. Mikolajczyk.

M. Mikolajczyk told Mr. Eden again on October 17 that if he accepted the Curzon line as a final frontier settlement, he would lose control not only of his own supporters in London but of the army and the Polish people. Nevertheless before leaving Moscow he wanted to try to get an agreement with M. Bierut on the other issues and also to see Stalin. He thought that, if he could settle these other questions, he might persuade his colleagues to accept the Curzon line. M. Mikolajczyk found M. Bierut willing to discuss the formation of a united Government, though he held out for a majority of seats. Stalin seemed ready to agree to the representation of the five parties in a new government with equal representation for the supporters of the London Government and those of the Committee.<sup>2</sup> M. Mikolajczyk therefore went back to London. The Prime Minister advised him strongly to return to Moscow as soon as possible and to set up a government in Poland.

On his return to London M. Mikolajczyk found even greater difficulty than he had expected in persuading the Polish Cabinet and

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 201, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister told M. Mikolajczyk in London that, in his (Mr. Churchill's) last conversation at Moscow, Stalin had seemed to imply that the National Committee would want more than half the seats in the government. Mr. Churchill had said that a Prime Minister must have a majority in his own government. Stalin did not seem to contradict this view, but gave no clear assent. In a telegram of October 22 to the President (for the text, see Churchill, VI, 209–11) the Prime Minister said that Stalin had first mentioned 'fifty-fifty' but had 'rapidly corrected himself to a worse figure.' M. Molotov had seemed 'more comprehending,' and the Prime Minister did not think that the composition of the government would be 'an insuperable obstacle if all else is settled.' M. Mikolajczyk once again pointed out to the Prime Minister the importance of the Ministry of the Interior, e.g. when the N.K.V.D. came into Poland with the Russians.



those of the Underground leaders who had escaped capture in Warsaw to accept his proposals. The Polish Government asked the Foreign Office on October 31 (i) whether the British Government would support at the Peace Conference the changes in the western frontier of Poland even if the United States disapproved of them, (ii) whether they would favour an extension of the western frontier to the Oder, (iii) whether they would guarantee the independence and integrity of the new Poland. The Foreign Office, with the approval of the War Cabinet, replied 'yes' to the first two questions, and, in answer to the third question, said that we would give a joint guarantee with the Soviet Government, and, if possible, with the United States, lasting until the establishment of a World Organisation.

The Prime Minister again on November 2 advised the Polish Ministers not to delay. The Soviet Embassy had asked the Foreign Office on October 28 to substitute the Polish National Committee for the Polish Government in London in the representation of Poland at a conference on European Inland Transport. M. Gusev was told that the Foreign Office regarded a request of this kind as extraordinary at a time when the Prime Minister and Stalin were trying to get agreement between the National Committee and the London Government.<sup>1</sup>

The Poles, however, wanted to get the views of the United States, and Mr. Roosevelt was unlikely to commit himself until after the election on November 7.<sup>2</sup> The Polish Government had asked the United States Government (i) whether they would accept, or at least not oppose, the proposed new frontiers of Poland, (ii) whether—without giving a binding guarantee—they would do all in their power to advocate and support Polish independence, and (iii) whether they would promise to assist the new Poland, e.g. in economic matters. On November 22 Mr. Harriman brought a letter from the President for M. Mikolajczyk. The President wrote that the United States wanted a free and independent Poland, and would accept a frontier arrangement approved by the Polish, British and Soviet Governments. They would give Poland economic help; they could not offer a guarantee, but were working for a World Organisation which would assume responsibility, *inter alia*, for the inviolability of agreed frontiers. Mr. Harriman was also authorised, if the Poles so desired, to make another attempt to retain Lwow for Poland.

On November 23 M. Mikolajczyk told Mr. Harriman that he could not get support for his policy from his colleagues outside his own Peasant Party, and that he had decided to resign. He submitted his resignation to the President of Poland without consulting the

<sup>1</sup> On March 13, 1945, the Soviet Government refused to take part in setting up the European Inland Transport Organisation unless the Lublin Poles were represented on it.

<sup>2</sup> On November 9, in answer to a message from the Prime Minister explaining the reasons for the Polish delay, Stalin said that M. Mikolajczyk was losing much valuable time and thereby diminishing his chances.

British Government, but explained later that he had resigned because his colleagues thought that, even if he came to some arrangement with the National Committee, the Russians would soon drive him from office. M. Mikolajczyk himself understood this risk, but considered that the alternative to an arrangement might well be the deportation of the best elements of the Polish population to Siberia and the destruction of the spirit of the nation.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden told M. Mikolajczyk on November 23 that they thought his decision was wise, and that they expected him to return to office in a short time. Meanwhile we should treat coldly, but correctly, any new Polish Government.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill agreed to send a message to Stalin explaining our position, and hoping that Stalin would act with us in trying to prevent any increase in the tension between the London Poles and the Committee. Stalin's answer was that the Polish ministerial changes in London were of no importance; M. Mikolajczyk had merely served as a cover for the criminal terrorists acting behind his back against the Russian forces in Poland. The National Committee was working well, and carrying out reforms in Poland, and we ought now to transfer our support to it.

The Prime Minister made a full statement on December 15 in the House of Commons about the British attitude. On the same day the President telegraphed to Mr. Churchill suggesting that he (Mr. Roosevelt) might send a message to Stalin proposing that he should delay action on the Polish question until he had discussed it at a meeting of the three Heads of Governments. The Prime Minister asked him to send the message at once in view of the likelihood of an immediate Russian move to recognise the Committee as a government.

Stalin's reply to the President on December 27 summed up at length the Russian allegations against the 'émigré' Government and their supporters in Poland, and invited the Allied Governments to exchange representatives with the National Committee in order to recognise it as the legitimate Provisional Government. President Roosevelt replied with a strong refusal. Stalin's answer, on January 1, 1945, was that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet had decided on December 27 to recognise the Committee as the Provisional Government of Poland. Stalin sent a similar message on January 4 to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister replied that, pending a joint discussion of the matter, we should continue to recognise the London Government.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A new government was formed on November 29 by M. Tomasz Arciszewski.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the exchange of letters, see Churchill, VI, 290-4.

*Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., and Iran after the treaty of January 29, 1942: Russian demands in 1944 for an oil concession in northern Iran: Iranian resistance to the demands: Foreign Office proposals for an early withdrawal of Allied troops from Iran.*

The Iranian Government, which had accepted a treaty with Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. under compulsion,<sup>1</sup> did little except under further compulsion to carry out its requirements. They were slow in rounding up the Germans still in the country; they also hesitated to break with Japan, and did not close the Japanese Legation in Teheran until April 23, 1942.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand they expected a great deal from the Allies—and especially from Great Britain—to meet their economic needs, and did very little to assist in measures to solve their own problems. These problems indeed were forced upon them by the war, and were common to the Middle Eastern countries. The most serious difficulties were the scarcity of grain and the inflation of the currency and consequent rise in prices which was increased by the shortage of consumer goods.

In normal times Iran was more than self-sufficient in the production of wheat; the trouble in 1941–2 came partly from bad harvests, but was aggravated by the failure of the administration to use its comprehensive powers of pre-emption to secure a fair distribution of supplies, and, especially, the provisioning of the cities. The Iranian administration, which at best was not highly competent, had been disorganised by the expulsion of the Shah; the Ministers and officials merely put to the Allies very large demands—which took no account of Allied shipping difficulties and the needs of neighbouring countries—and then complained at the lack of consideration shewn to them.<sup>3</sup> The British authorities had to take the chief burden of this criticism. Public opinion set the blame for the monetary inflation wholly upon British requirements for currency, though in fact the currency was needed to meet the heavy local expenditure connected with

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter VII, section (v).

<sup>2</sup> The Iranian Government declared war on Germany and signed the United Nations Declaration in September, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> Sir R. Bullard, British Minister at Teheran, had strongly recommended the Iranian Government to ask for the services of American advisers. Dr. A. C. Millsbaugh, an American citizen who had been Adviser to the Persian Government from 1922 to 1927, was reappointed to advise in the reorganisation of finance. Another American, Mr. Sheridan, was appointed Adviser in regard to food supplies in September, 1942. Since it was impossible to provide more British transport personnel for a promised increase of supplies to Russia through Iran, the United States Government agreed in September, 1942, to take over the operation of the ports, the Trans-Iranian railway, and most of the road traffic to Russia. The British authorities remained responsible for security and for inland water transportation, and for the transport of material sent through Kermanshah.

developing and maintaining the transport of supplies across Iran to Russia. Owing to pressure in the Majlis, which possessed almost unlimited powers of criticism and no administrative responsibilities, the Iranian Government threatened in the late autumn of 1942 not to provide any more currency unless their demands for wheat were met.

Sir R. Bullard thought that, if we were to get adequate cooperation from the Iranian Government, we should have to put pressure on them to obtain emergency powers. The Americans, however, believed that their own prestige and previous disinterestedness in Iran would be sufficient to secure our requirements. A compromise agreement was reached on December 4, 1942, in which the Iranian Government were guaranteed sufficient supplies of grain in return for the provision of currency. This agreement did not reduce the cost of living, and a few days later rioting broke out in Teheran. The Government was able to suppress the trouble, but the situation alarmed the Americans. The State Department, partly owing to wrong information received from the United States Minister at Teheran, inclined to blame British high-handedness. The Foreign Office sent a very strong answer, with a full explanation of the facts.

This explanation, and a visit by Mr. Casey to Washington, did a great deal to improve Anglo-American cooperation. The Russians, however, continued to be suspicious both of the British and Americans, and to hold off proposals for collaboration. They refused early in the occupation a proposal, made by Sir R. Bullard, and supported by the Foreign Office, for a joint British, Russian, and Iranian Commission in Teheran to deal with non-military questions. They added greatly to the food problem in the winter of 1942-3 by their own demands, and by their unwillingness to allow the transport of wheat to Teheran from Azerbaijan and Khorassan.<sup>1</sup> They made the largest demands for the transport of material for themselves and were well satisfied to allow the British authorities to incur unpopularity in putting the movement of this material before the convenience of the local population. They were equally uncooperative towards the Americans. The State Department in September, 1943, asked whether the British Government could get more Russian support for Dr. Millspaugh and his staff.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulties of Iran were discussed at the Moscow and Teheran Conferences in 1943. At the Moscow Conference the Russians,

<sup>1</sup> Even after the Soviet Government had promised to assist in the transport of grain from the north, their local representatives continued to hold up the supplies. When they finally decided to send wheat to Teheran, they made great propagandist use of the deliveries, though in fact they provided less than the normal quantity which would have come to Teheran from the northern provinces (where the harvests were better than they had been in the south).

<sup>2</sup> The Russians had warned the Iranian Government against the 'principle' of accepting American advisers. A Foreign Office comment described the Russian attitude towards these advisers as one of 'non-cooperation tempered with obstruction.'

somewhat ominously, refused a British proposal for a declaration which would reassure the Iranians about present and future Allied aims. At the Teheran Conference, however, the Russians were more forthcoming, at least in verbal assurances. Stalin was friendly and affable to the Shah, and willing to sign a tripartite declaration (issued at the end of the Conference) which renewed previous assurances safeguarding the independence and territorial integrity of the country, and promised economic aid after the war.

Any confidence in the assurances given by Stalin at the Teheran Conference could hardly have survived a careful study of Russian policy in the northern provinces. The American advisers to the Iranian Government were unable to extend their reforms to the areas under Russian control or even to visit them freely, while in Teheran Russian propaganda continued to attack the advisers and the 'subservience' of the Iranian Government in employing them. The State Department were now much disturbed at the situation. Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Wallace Murray, on their visit to London in April, 1944,<sup>1</sup> agreed with the Foreign Office upon an approach to the Russians for closer collaboration, and, in particular, the establishment of a tripartite committee in Teheran. The Russians were willing to discuss economic questions with the British and United States Ambassadors<sup>2</sup> at Teheran, but did not think it necessary to set up a special committee.

In September, 1944, when there had been some signs of improvement in relations with the Russians, the Soviet Government sent a special mission to Teheran to ask for a five-year exploratory oil concession covering the five northern provinces of Persia. This exploratory concession would be followed by a grant of rights over a smaller area in which oil had been found. The Russians also asked that all other foreign oil companies should be excluded from the area to which their proposed concession applied. Sir R. Bullard's view was that, if the Iranian Government granted this concession to the exclusion of other competitors, they would be surrendering political control of their northern provinces. The Russians were unlikely to keep troops in Iran after the war in contravention of their treaty, but they would encourage 'spontaneous' applications for annexation, and create economic enclaves in northern Persia under the guise of oil concessions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 395-6. Mr. Stettinius was at this time Under-Secretary of State. Mr. Wallace Murray was Political Adviser for Middle East Affairs (including India) in the State Department.

<sup>2</sup> In February, 1944, the British Legation at Teheran was raised to the status of an Embassy. The United States Government took a similar step with regard to their Legation.

<sup>3</sup> The Russians were already shewing special favour in their zone to the Iranian Tudeh party. This party was pro-Russian, and reformist, but not proletarian. It included a number of landowners dispossessed by Riza Shah. The Russians, using their familiar method, put their protégés of the Tudeh party into the control of the local administration in the areas under Soviet occupation.

These demands were awkward for the British and United States Governments, since they had already given their approval to applications for oil concessions from British and American companies. The difference was that the Russian demands were exclusive, and—in view of the Russian state control of industrial enterprises—entirely governmental, and that, as Sir R. Bullard had pointed out, Russian monopoly control of oil resources would certainly be followed by political control. The British and United States Governments, however, could not use this argument plainly with the Russians, since they would at once deny it. In any case the argument was weakened by the fact that the Americans were obtaining something very like indirect political control in Saudi Arabia.<sup>1</sup>

The British Government wanted a British company to share in the new concessions in the south—in order to increase the sources of 'sterling oil'—but if, owing to British and American advice and encouragement, the Iranian Government refused the Russian demand in the north, the Russians would see to it that no concessions were granted in the south. The Iranian Government themselves wanted to postpone giving any oil concessions until after the war. The Foreign Office thought that the political interest concerned—the preservation of the independence of Iran—was more important than the economic interest in securing a British concession in the south.

The Russians did harm to their own case by making violent propagandist attacks on the Iranian Prime Minister and his colleagues when they proposed the postponement of all concessions until after the war. The Iranian Government then asked for British or American representations to the Russians. The two Governments protested to the Soviet Government at the beginning of November that, in view of the treaty of 1942 and of the Teheran Declaration, the Iranians had the right to decide for themselves whether they would grant concessions during the war. This protest, and, still more, the publicity given to the high-handed methods by which the Russians were trying to enforce their demands, had some effect, but the pressure on the Iranian Government continued. On November 9 the Iranian Prime Minister resigned in the belief that the Russians would then feel able to give up their demands without loss of prestige.

After a further British approach to the Russians had gone unanswered the War Cabinet agreed that the Prime Minister should suggest a joint message from the President and himself to Stalin that they would like to discuss the matter at their next meeting. Meanwhile Sir R. Bullard was instructed to tell the Iranians of our approach to the Russians, and our hope that the new Iranian Government would not give way to the Russian demands. In fact, the Majlis went much further than the British or the Russians had expected.

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 399–401.



Under the leadership of Dr. Mussaddiq, a leading politician and opponent of all oil concessions (including those of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company), they passed a bill on December 2 forbidding Iranian Ministers or officials to conclude or even discuss any oil agreement without parliamentary approval.

The Russians were angry at this final and abrupt—and public—rejection of their demands. They warned the Iranian Government that their relations with the U.S.S.R. could not be good until the new law had been amended. They also complained of British interference. The Secretary of State sent a reply pointing out that Iran as an independent sovereign State had a right to grant or withhold concessions, and that the Russian persistence in pressing their demands, after they knew of the Iranian refusal, had provoked the Majlis into passing the law of December 2.

Thus, for the time at least, the question of oil concessions—including those asked for by the British and American companies—was dropped. The Foreign Office suggested that at the Yalta Conference, we might give a hint that, after foreign troops had been withdrawn from Iran, the three Great Powers chiefly responsible for world security might discuss with the Iranian Government the future of the undeveloped oil deposits in the country. A proposal of this kind would shew the Russians that our aim in supporting the independence of Iran was not to exclude them permanently from any share in Iranian oil.

Throughout this time the Foreign Office had been considering the question of the withdrawal of British and Russian troops from Iran after the war. Sir R. Bullard pointed out again and again the importance of getting the Russians out as soon as possible. As long as they were in the northern provinces, they could bully or even exclude Iranian police and troops, incite mobs to violence against the Government, and hold up food supplies for the capital. The Foreign Office agreed that the withdrawal should take place as soon as possible, and in any case not later than the time laid down in the treaty, i.e. six months after the end of the war. The Russians, however, were unlikely to leave the north until the British left the south, but owing to the need to protect the transit route to Russia a British force might have to be maintained as far north as Teheran if the Russians came into the war with Japan, and needed oil from Iran.<sup>1</sup>

On December, 1944, Mr. Churchill wrote to Mr. Eden that, in view of the general difficulties with Russia, he thought that it would be a mistake to withdraw our garrisons from Iran. Mr. Eden replied that there was no question of immediate withdrawal. The problem

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Bullard commented: 'What luck the Russians have. The more we help them, the greater their chance of strangling Persia.'

was to get the Russians out of Iran; we should withdraw only *pari passu* with them. We did not want a repetition of the policy of 1907 and the division of Iran into spheres of influence; our policy, to which we were committed by our undertakings, was that we and the Russians should keep out and leave the Iranians to run their own country. The Prime Minister agreed, though he doubted whether the Russians would withdraw.

The Foreign Office thus wanted to use the Yalta Conference as an opportunity for coming to a general arrangement with the Russians. The Iranian Government themselves asked whether we could try to get the Russians to conform to the treaty and the Teheran declaration. The Foreign Office considered that we could point out that the smaller Powers' dislike of a 'Great Power veto' on the Security Council would be dangerously increased if, in the first test case of Iran, one of the three Powers was seen to be breaking specific obligations in its private interest and the other two to be making no effective protest.

With the support of the United States Delegation, therefore, Mr. Eden proposed on February 8 at Yalta that the three Powers should agree not to interfere in Iranian affairs; that they should leave the question of oil concessions until the withdrawal of their troops, and that they should make a statement that they would begin this withdrawal earlier than the final date laid down in the treaty and as soon as the supply route to Russia had been closed. M. Molotov thought that there was no need for a 'self-denying' agreement, or for a statement to reassure the Iranians about oil or withdrawal of foreign troops. The Prime Minister tried to get Stalin to accept some statement. Stalin and Molotov repeated that Russia had no intention of putting pressure on Iran, and stood by the treaty and the declaration. Stalin also refused any preliminary discussion of the withdrawal of Allied troops, but, after a talk with Mr. Eden, undertook to examine the matter further on his return to Moscow.

Early in April, 1945, the Foreign Office considered what they could do to meet further pressure by the Russians on Iran. The Russians had shewn in Poland, Roumania, and Bulgaria how they dealt with a government which they wished to destroy. They alleged that this government was unable to keep order, and was therefore a threat to Soviet authority, and also that the government was 'fascist' and should be replaced by a 'democratic' government which, in M. Vyshinsky's words, would 'give their efforts to the service of the people.' On these lines the Russians might claim that their interests were threatened by disorders in Azerbaijan or even in Teheran, and that the government was fascist.

The Foreign Office thought that, if the Russians tried 'shock tactics,' as in Roumania, we should make immediate representations,

and disprove any claim that their nominees represented the democratic forces' of the country. We should have a list of cases in which the Russians had prevented the Iranian Government from keeping order and should see that they (the Russians) did not stop messages from press correspondents describing what was happening. The only real safeguard, however, was the withdrawal of all foreign troops. The Foreign Office were therefore most disquieted at the unwillingness of the British military authorities to agree to a rapid withdrawal of British forces in the south. On May 19 the Iranian Government asked the British, Russian and United States Governments for the withdrawal of their troops. Mr. Eden wanted to make a public offer to take the British troops away before the final treaty date if all other foreign troops also left the country, but the Chiefs of Staff thought it necessary to keep a force to protect the oil installations against sabotage and damage by bandits.

The Prime Minister was unwilling to overrule the Chiefs of Staff. The Foreign Office, however, continued to recommend a withdrawal as soon as possible. Sir R. Bullard reported in July that the Russians were making a great effort to get control over Iran before their troops were withdrawn. They were backing the disruptive tactics of the Tudeh party, and were intimidating the supporters of the Government in order to secure control of the Majlis. Mr. Eden put the case once again to the Prime Minister and obtained his consent to the submission of proposals to the Potsdam Conference for a complete joint withdrawal in three stages. Mr. Churchill himself supported the proposal at the Conference. The United States Delegation also favoured withdrawal, but Stalin would not agree to anything more than a first stage—i.e. the evacuation of Teheran. The Conference agreed to ask the Council of Foreign Ministers to consider the further stages of withdrawal.

## CHAPTER XVI

Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., and Turkey from the Adana Conference in January, 1943, to the Potsdam Conference

### (i)

*Mr. Churchill's meeting with the Turkish President and Ministers at Adana, January 30-31, 1943: Turkish unwillingness to enter the war: uncertainty of British policy with regard to Turkey.*

THE German attack on Russia postponed, though it did not remove, the danger of an advance through Turkey. For a time indeed in the summer and early autumn of 1942, the threat was serious, but even in August, 1942, the British military authorities did not expect the Germans to make a move into Turkish territory before the spring of 1943. Within four months of this estimate the danger had receded. The Allies had regained the military initiative, and, with it, much greater bargaining power in negotiating with the neutral States at either end of the Mediterranean. The military recovery of Russia, however, was less welcome to Turkey than to the Western Powers. From the Turkish point of view, a vast German defeat in Russia might well have as serious consequences as a German victory.

The Turkish Government were also afraid that Great Britain might be unwilling, and perhaps unable to protect them from Russian demands. They had been uneasy over Mr. Eden's visit to Moscow in December, 1941, and over the conclusion of the Anglo-Soviet treaty in May, 1942. In each case the Foreign Office had tried to reassure them about Russian intentions. Mr. Eden had sent a personal message from Moscow through Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen to the President of the Turkish Republic that the Russian attitude towards Turkey was entirely satisfactory. On the day of the signature of the Anglo-Soviet treaty Mr. Eden gave the Turkish Ambassador a declaration confirming the adherence of the British Government to the Montreux Convention, and their intention to observe the territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic, and also offering Turkey assistance if she were attacked.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Government gave assurances on similar lines.

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<sup>1</sup> For the negotiations over the supply of arms to Turkey, and the attempts, especially in 1942, to prevent Germany from getting any large quantities of Turkish chrome, see Medlicott, II, Chap. VIII, (ii).

Until the last months of 1942 there was no question of trying to get Turkey to enter the war on the Allied side. The Allies could neither give direct military aid nor supply the Turks with arms on a sufficient scale. In any case the Turkish Government shewed no sign of wishing to change their policy of neutrality. After the battle of El Alamein, and the successful landings in North Africa, the Prime Minister thought that the Allies should try to bring Turkey into the war in the spring of 1943. For a time President Roosevelt also took this view. He suggested in a telegram to the Prime Minister on November 12 that the British and American staffs might survey the possibilities of getting Turkish support for a flank attack against Germany from the Black Sea.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister welcomed this opportunity of opening the Dardanelles and bombing the Roumanian oil fields. He proposed as a first stage the offer of a joint British, American, and Russian guarantee of territorial integrity to Turkey. Within a week, however, Mr. Roosevelt replied in much more guarded terms about future action in the Mediterranean, and did not even mention Turkey. Stalin also wanted to be sure that proposals about Turkish belligerency (with a consequent change in Allied military plans) did not mean the postponement of the opening of a second front in Europe in 1943.

The Foreign Office was much less confident than the Prime Minister that Turkey would give up her neutrality. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen did not think that there was any likelihood of a change in policy; the Turkish Government realised that, however much we might be displeased with their refusal to come into the war, we should want them to be strong and friendly to us. Nevertheless at the Casablanca Conference Mr. Churchill, after discussing the matter with the President, proposed to go to see the Turkish Prime Minister. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Eden telegraphed that they thought this proposal unwise, but the Prime Minister replied that he did not want to lose a 'golden opportunity.' He would not try to get any pledge from the Turks, but would offer them a guarantee, substantial aid in munitions, and a promise of help if they were attacked. He did not think that any bad consequences would follow if they refused his offer.<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister met the Turkish President and Ministers at Adana on January 30-31.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Churchill first gave them a note as 'background' for the discussions. He then stated his proposals for aiding Turkey to prepare her own defence, and explained the assistance which the Allies could provide if Turkey were drawn into the war. Mr. Churchill set out for the Turkish Ministers his own views on

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the President's telegram, see Churchill, IV, 566.

<sup>2</sup> For the Prime Minister's correspondence with Mr. Attlee and Mr. Eden, see Churchill, IV, 626-9.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of the Adana conversations, and the relevant part of the text of the Prime Minister's note about post-war security, see Churchill, IV, 631-7.

the world organisation of security after the war. He tried to meet the Turkish fears of Russian 'imperialism' after the war by pointing out that the safest policy for Turkey would be to establish her position as one of the victorious belligerents and an ally of Great Britain, the United States, and Russia. If Turkey became a full belligerent, Great Britain would offer her a guarantee of territorial integrity and post-war rights in a treaty either alone or with the U.S.S.R.; the Americans were also likely to associate themselves with the guarantee. Mr. Churchill did not ask the Turkish Government to enter the war before their armed strength had increased and the Germans had withdrawn to a greater distance from the Turkish frontiers, or at a risk of exhausting the country's resources. He thought that they might even render assistance without entering the war, e.g. by allowing the Allies to attack the Roumanian oil fields from Turkish bases.

The Turkish Ministers were friendly and forthcoming. They listened to the Prime Minister's exposition, and were obviously relieved that he did not ask them to enter the war at once. The Prime Minister thought their attitude realistic and encouraging. During the next few months, however, Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen continued to report that he saw no signs of any 'advance' in Turkish policy from strict neutrality. On April 16-17 General Wilson went to Ankara. He and Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen told M. Sarajoglu, the Turkish Prime Minister,<sup>1</sup> that we were not thinking yet of asking Turkey to come into the war, but that the time might come—probably not until September, or even later—when the Turkish Government could assist in shortening the war either by coming into it or by allowing the Allies the use of Turkish territory. Three weeks later Mr. Eden told the Turkish Ambassador in London that he hoped that Turkey would soon cease to be a non-belligerent. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen also spoke plainly to M. Sarajoglu that Turkey would soon have to choose between entry into the war and isolation.

The Turkish Ministers continued to argue that Turkey was not ready for war, and that the only result of her entering it would be the destruction of her large towns by the German air force. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen thought that the Turks might have been warned by the Germans of air attack if they entered the war or allowed the Allies to use their territory. At all events, as the military position of the Allies improved, and the time for their request to Turkey to give up her neutrality seemed to be approaching, the Turkish Government talked even more strongly of the risks they would run—'Istanbul would be in ashes in twenty-four hours'—without securing any compensating advantage to the Allied cause.

Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen was sure that the Turks would never

<sup>1</sup> M. Numan Menemencioglu had succeeded M. Sarajoglu as Foreign Minister in August, 1942.



enter the war willingly. The Foreign Office thought that they were bargaining for more material help; the Prime Minister continued to assume that, if Italy were driven out of the war, and the three major Allies asked for the use of Turkish bases in order to bomb Ploesti, the Turks could hardly refuse them. At the end of June, however, it was clear that Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen's estimate was right. The Turks remained firmly on the Allied side; they realised that co-operation with the three Great Powers was their only sure protection against Russia, but they maintained that they had been left free to choose their own time to come into the war. They did not regard themselves as bound to do so under their Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain.

In these circumstances the British Government had to consider whether they should go on sending military equipment into Turkey, and, generally, whether they should warn the Turkish Government that they might lose British political support. The Foreign Office did not want to risk any threat of this kind, since, apart from the possibility that the Turks might then turn to Germany, there was a danger that if they felt they could not rely on British friendship after the war, they might 'compound' with Russia in an agreement which would give the Russians control of the Straits.

In any case the Foreign Office were in some difficulty because they did not know whether the Anglo-American military plans after the Sicilian invasion would now require the entry of Turkey into the war. The Chiefs of Staff themselves could not give a definite opinion until these plans had been decided by the President and the Prime Minister and the Combined Chiefs of Staff. At the end of September it was clear that the military plans at all events in 1943 would not require Turkish cooperation or the use of Turkish bases. We could not, however, let the Turks know this since sufficient information might reach the Germans to enable them to guess what our plans were. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen was therefore instructed to tell the Turkish Government that for the present we were not putting any definite request to them to enter the war, though we might do so, and that we regarded them as bound by the Anglo-Turkish treaty to join us if we required them to do so. Meanwhile we wanted help in other ways, e.g. the stoppage of supplies of chrome to Germany, a strict interpretation of the Montreux Convention in order to prevent the passage of German shipping of military importance through the Straits; the completion of airfields and general improvement of facilities in Turkey.

## (ii)

*Russian proposals at the Moscow Conference in October, 1943, for bringing Turkey into the war: Mr. Eden's conversations with the Turkish Foreign Minister in Cairo: discussions on Turkey at the Teheran Conference: the Cairo meetings, December 4-7, 1943.*

During the operations in the Dodecanese which aimed—unsuccessfully—at the capture of Rhodes, the Turkish Government complied with British requests amounting in fact to the use of Turkish territory as a base of supply. Allied ships made use of Turkish territorial waters and military transport flew over the coast. The Foreign Office regarded this cooperation as most satisfactory, but it was not the same thing as the entry of Turkey into the war. The failure of the operations against the islands was unlikely to make the Turks any readier to give up their neutrality, and we were, in fact, unable either to provide the assistance which we had promised or to make use of Turkish belligerency.

The Russians, however, were now showing by a press campaign and by direct statements to the Turkish Government that they were dissatisfied with Turkish neutrality, and suspicious that the British supply of arms to Turkey was not for use against the Germans but was intended to 'build up' Turkey against Russia after the war. The Turks on their side were afraid that the Russians wanted to weaken them by pushing them into a war in which the Germans would certainly do them immense damage.

At the Moscow Conference in October, 1943, M. Molotov proposed that the three Governments should suggest to the Turks that they should enter the war at once. Mr. Eden thought that we should ask the Russians why they wanted Turkey to act at once, and that we should suggest delay until we had the forces available to make use of Turkish belligerency. The Prime Minister, however, after discussions with the Chiefs of Staff and Sir A. Cadogan, decided that we ought to be more forthcoming to the Russians. He telegraphed to Mr. Eden on October 23, and again two days later, agreeing that, if we forced Turkey into the war, she would insist upon air support, etc., which we could not provide. On the other hand, if Turkey came in on her own initiative, we should not have the same obligations of support, and might get great advantages. 'The prize would be to get into the Black Sea with supplies for Russia, warships, and other forces.' Mr. Churchill did not think that the Germans would be able to invade Turkey. He agreed that we should find out the reasons for the Russian proposal, but did not want us to 'begin by crabbing everything.'

Mr. Eden had already asked Stalin why he wished to get Turkey

into the war at once. He pointed out that we were weak in the eastern Mediterranean; that Istanbul was vulnerable, and that we could not send the air supplies promised to the Turkish Government. Stalin said that Turkish belligerency would not be necessary in 1944, and that the arms supplied to her would have been wasted. She could now draw off some ten German divisions, and Germany could do nothing against her.

Mr. Eden circulated a memorandum to the Conference after getting the Prime Minister's telegram of October 23. He agreed that the entry of Turkey into the war would help the Allies. If we could not persuade her to come into the war, we might ask for the use of airfields in south-west Anatolia. Mr. Hull also explained that the United States Government did not think it desirable to accept the diversion of Allied resources which would be necessary if we put pressure on Turkey to come into the war; we should only request the lease of air bases and transport facilities. After further argument, in which M. Molotov again enquired why we were supplying Turkey with arms if we did not want her to enter the war, the Russians agreed to Mr. Eden's proposal to ask at once for the use of airfields, while Mr. Eden agreed to include in the protocol of the Conference a statement that it was most desirable for Turkey to enter the war before the end of 1943.

After the Moscow Conference Mr. Eden met M. Numan at Cairo.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden had suggested that the Russians might wish to be represented at the meeting; M. Molotov was willing to leave the negotiations in British hands. Mr. Eden had four meetings with M. Numan between November 5 and 8. He asked, on behalf of Great Britain, for the use of air bases for operations against Rhodes, and, on behalf of the three Allied Governments, that Turkey should enter the war before the end of the year, though she need not undertake any offensive operations. He said that we did not expect the Germans to attack Turkey if she granted us bases. He also warned M. Numan that, if the Turks refused our request, we could not continue to send them supplies. M. Numan thought that the Germans would certainly attack Turkey if she allowed us the use of bases. He was most suspicious of Russian plans for dominating the Balkans after the war, and argued that Turkish belligerency would be of no value to Great Britain if the country were left militarily exhausted. Finally he agreed to put Mr. Eden's requests to the Turkish Government, though, obviously, he did not expect a favourable answer. On November 15

<sup>1</sup> The initiative for this meeting came from the Turkish side. Mr. Eden was inclined not to accept the suggestion, but the Foreign Office pointed out that the entry of Turkey into the war was desirable as the best, if not the only way to prevent the Balkan countries from falling entirely under Russian influence. If the Turks maintained their neutrality, British forces would probably be unable to get into the Balkans before the Russians had established themselves there.

M. Numan told Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen that Turkey must refuse Mr. Eden's two requests.

Within a short time after the Moscow Conference the Russians were less interested in Turkish belligerency, and unwilling to put any pressure on her if it meant a diversion of Allied forces and, possibly, a postponement of the cross-Channel invasion for six or eight weeks. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, was more anxious to get Turkey into the war, and more hopeful of persuading her 'to come in.' The question was discussed at the Teheran Conference from the point of view of general Allied strategy. The President agreed with the Russian view that expeditions in the eastern Mediterranean, other than on a small scale, might cause delay in the western offensive. Stalin, however, was willing to promise to declare war on Bulgaria if the latter attacked Turkey. Mr. Churchill said that he would tell the Turks that if they refused a tripartite invitation, the British Government would lose interest in Turkish territorial rights, particularly with regard to the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.<sup>1</sup>

The Conference agreed that the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt should invite the Turkish President to meet them in Cairo, and that they should try to get Turkey to enter the war before the end of the year. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen thought that Turkey was still not prepared for war, and that public opinion would strongly oppose action by the Government to enter the war under foreign pressure. In any case, before the opening of the conversations on December 4, the British Chiefs of Staff suggested that for military reasons mid-February would be a better date than the end of December. The Turkish President and Ministers used the familiar arguments about air attack, but were ready in principle to agree to come into the war. Mr. Churchill proposed that the Turks should begin at once with the preparation of aerodromes, and allow the infiltration of Allied technicians. On February 15, 1944, American and British squadrons would fly into Turkey. Mr. Churchill made it clear that if, in February, the Turks refused to admit the air squadrons, the Allies would direct their resources elsewhere and give up hopes of cooperation with Turkey. If they agreed, Allied reinforcements would be sent at once.

<sup>1</sup> M. Molotov later asked Mr. Churchill what he had in mind about the Straits. Mr. Churchill said that he could not commit the War Cabinet, but that he thought that the régime of the Straits should be reviewed. At luncheon on November 30 with the Prime Minister and the President Stalin raised the question of warm water ports. Mr. Churchill said that on the British side there were 'no obstacles.' Stalin then said that the question of the Straits would have to be considered. Mr. Churchill said that he wanted to get Turkey into the war, and that the moment was awkward for raising the question of the Straits. Stalin replied that the time would come later. The President thought that the Dardanelles ought to be free to the commerce of the world. In answer to a question from Stalin, the President and the Prime Minister agreed that such freedom would apply to Russian commerce.

## (iii)

*Turkish unwillingness to carry out the plan proposed at Cairo: final phase of Anglo-Turkish relations: British opposition at the Potsdam Conference to the Russian demands on Turkey.*

On December 11, 1943, M. Numan told Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen that the Turkish Government accepted the British plan—again ‘in principle’—but that the crucial question was the amount of aid which the Allies would provide. The Turkish demands were very high, and the Prime Minister inclined at first to instruct Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen to warn the Turkish Government that a refusal on February 15 would mean ‘the virtual end of the alliance,’ and that ‘making impossible demands is only another way of saying no.’ The instructions finally sent to Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen were that he should make an adequate offer of supplies, and say that in the event of a refusal or deliberate procrastination we should have to consider cutting off the supplies, and leaving Turkey in isolation at the end of the war. Owing to the development of air warfare the status of the Dardanelles had ceased to be a vital interest to us and Turkey could not always count on our support to resist Russian demands. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen was also instructed on December 18 to say that the three Commanders-in-Chief, Middle East, would go to Ankara for discussions.

The Turkish Government considered that this visit would be a final provocation to Germany. They refused to receive the Commanders-in-Chief, and asked that officers of lesser rank should be sent. They complained that, under Russian influence, we were driving them into war regardless of the consequences to themselves, and that they did not know our general plans, i.e. whether we intended attacks on the Germans elsewhere. M. Numan assured Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen on January 6, 1944, that Turkey would come into the war as soon as operations in the west had begun successfully.<sup>1</sup> Obviously no direct answer could be given to an offer of this kind. Air Marshal Sir John Linnell, however, went to Ankara at the head of a military mission,<sup>2</sup> but it was clear that the Turkish Government did not intend to risk committing themselves to war until they were sure that the Germans could not retaliate against them. The Foreign Office considered,

<sup>1</sup> It became known to the Foreign Office in January, 1944, that von Papen had secured possession from an agent of documents in the British Embassy. The documents included the telegram containing this statement by M. Numan, and papers concerned with the Cairo Conference in November and the meetings with the Turkish Ministers at Cairo in December, 1943. No later leakages are known to have taken place. M. Numan told Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen on January 6, 1944, that von Papen ‘knew considerably more about what is going on than was good for him.’

<sup>2</sup> I have not dealt with Air Marshal Linnell’s discussions at Ankara.

rightly, that they still took the view that on balance they had more to gain than to lose by remaining neutral and that, whatever we might say, they could be sure of our support for them against Russian demands after the war. The question therefore was whether we should tell them that a refusal would mean a break with us.

The Prime Minister again inclined to the more drastic action, but the Foreign Office did not think that we should give the Turks an ultimatum. We should, in fact, need a friendly Turkey after the war, and ought not to risk our long-term political interests unless the immediate military reasons for doing so were strong. Since the Cairo Conference we had had to postpone once again the operations we had planned against Rhodes and in the Aegean, and for which we had specially wanted Turkish belligerency. The Chiefs of Staff thought it undesirable to do anything which would allow the Germans to conclude that they need take no account of a possible declaration of war by Turkey. The best policy, therefore, in the circumstances, was that we should withdraw our military mission, and—without any explanation—give up for the time sending supplies. The Prime Minister summed up this policy as 'just silence and fade away.'

Such a policy might be desirable as a means of showing dissatisfaction at the Turkish refusal to carry out their treaty obligations, but it could not be described as 'long-term.' At the beginning of May, 1944, the Turkish Government agreed, somewhat unexpectedly, to put an embargo on all exports of chrome to Germany,<sup>1</sup> even though in so doing they were acting contrary to an agreement with the Germans. There were also signs that they wanted to resume Anglo-Turkish military conversations. The British Government asked them at the end of June to break off military and diplomatic relations with Germany. This action would leave the Germans uncertain about the possibility of Allied operations in the eastern Mediterranean, but was unlikely to provoke a German attack on Turkey and thus produce a Turkish demand for assistance which we could not easily provide. The Soviet Government regarded our proposal as insufficient, and wished Turkey to come into the war at once, but their reasons for doing so were now suspicious. They had now little military reason for wanting Turkish belligerency, and might well be trying to isolate and discredit Turkey after the war.<sup>2</sup>

The Turkish Government broke off diplomatic relations with Germany on August 2, 1944. Two months later, Mr. Churchill thought of asking the Turkish President to meet him on his way to Moscow, and of trying once more to get Turkey to declare war, but

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<sup>1</sup> For these economic negotiations with Turkey, see Medlicott, II, ch. XVIII, especially section iv.

<sup>2</sup> For an exchange of telegrams between the Prime Minister and Stalin on the question of Turkish belligerency, see Churchill, VI, 69-71.



the Foreign Office pointed out that Turkey could do nothing now to help in shortening the war.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office were indeed more concerned with the demands which the Russians were likely to make for the revision of the Montreux Convention. They realised that some modification was necessary. Thus Japan was one of the signatories, and the terms of the Convention had been drawn up to fit in with the organisation of the League, and with provisions in naval treaties which were now obsolete.

The Russians raised the question of the Straits at the Moscow meeting with the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden. The Prime Minister—partly in reaction to the refusal of the Turks to take his advice—was more forthcoming than Mr. Eden and the Foreign Office could have wished; they thought that, even if we could not resist the Russian demands, we need not go out of our way to agree that they were justified. Mr. Churchill, however, committed himself only to a general promise of support and a request to the Russians to say what they wanted.

The Soviet Government did not state their demands before the meeting of the Yalta Conference. At the sixth plenary meeting of the Conference on February 10, 1945, Stalin asked for a revision of the Convention. The matter was discussed by the Foreign Ministers, but the Russians made no detailed proposals, and agreed that the Foreign Ministers should consider the question at their first meeting in London.<sup>2</sup> Since the Foreign Ministers did not meet before the Potsdam Conference, the Russians were unable to submit proposals to it. They shewed the general extent of their demands in reply to a Turkish approach for a new Russo-Turkish treaty. The Russian reply—on June 7, 1945—was for the cession of the provinces of Kars and Ardahan, the grant of bases in the Straits<sup>3</sup> and a revision of the Montreux Convention by a Russo-Turkish agreement.

The Turks—obviously—refused the first two of these demands, and were glad to agree to a British proposal for an Anglo-American statement to the Soviet Government supporting their refusal. The United States Government would not join in any statement, but the Foreign Office instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr to ask the Russians to postpone further consideration of their demands until the Potsdam Conference. They put forward their demands again at the Potsdam Conference. Mr. Churchill said that he could not support, or ask the Turks to agree, to the fortification of the Straits by means of a Russian base or to the proposal that Russia and Turkey alone should determine the régime of the Straits. He also objected to the Russian

<sup>1</sup> For the Turkish declaration of war on Germany see below, p. 492, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 487, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> M. Molotov appears to have said later that the Russians would want bases only in war time. The Russian demands at Potsdam were not qualified in this way.

demand for the cession of Kars and Ardahan. Stalin said that Kars was part of Armenia and Ardahan part of Georgia, and that, if Turkey wanted an alliance for the defence of frontiers, the Soviet Government would first require the existing frontiers to be changed. If Turkey did not agree, the alliance would be dropped, but the Russians would be willing to make an agreement about the Straits. If Turkey would not allow a Russian naval base in the Straits, the Soviet Government wanted one elsewhere for the repair and refuelling of their fleet.<sup>1</sup>

President Truman said that the territorial questions between Russia and Turkey should be settled between them, but that the question of the Straits and other international waterways concerned the whole world and must be settled by the Great Powers. The President then read out a paper on the application of the principle of 'free and unrestricted navigation of international inland waterways.'<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill accepted Stalin's proposal for the opening of the Straits to Russian merchant vessels and warships whether in peace or war, and the President's proposal that this freedom of navigation should be guaranteed by all concerned. He asked Stalin to consider this proposal rather than press for a Russian naval base near Istanbul.

Stalin, however, was unwilling to give up the Russian demand for a base. The discussion therefore came to an end without an agreement. The President, however, would not allow his larger proposal to fade out of sight. He asked that it should be discussed at the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in September, 1945.<sup>3</sup> He also stipulated that he should be free to disclose his proposals in a public statement. The President made this statement in a broadcast on August 9. Meanwhile the Foreign Office had told the Turkish Government of the proposal for the internationalisation of the Straits, and had pointed out to them the importance for Turkey of the association of the United States with an international régime. After the President's broadcast, M. Sarajoglu said to the British Ambassador that the Turkish Government were prepared to accept the principle of internationalisation provided that Turkish sovereignty was not impaired.

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<sup>1</sup> Stalin asked Mr. Churchill at dinner on July 23 whether he would agree to allow the Russians a fortified base at Dedeagach. Mr. Churchill evaded the question by answering that he would always support the Russian claim 'to the freedom of the seas all the year round.' Churchill, VI, 579.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 567-8.

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 537 and 541.

## CHAPTER XVII

British policy towards Yugoslavia from the capitulation of the Yugoslav army to the formation of a United Yugoslav Government in March, 1945<sup>1</sup>

### (i)

*The situation in Yugoslavia after the capitulation of the Yugoslav army: British policy towards the Cetniks and the Partisans until the autumn of 1943: Brigadier Maclean's report of November, 1943.*<sup>1</sup>

THE treatment of Yugoslavia by the Germans and Italians, after the capitulation of the Yugoslav army in April, 1941, is a grim record of their lack of constructive statesmanship. The conquerors, and particularly the Germans, used their powers most savagely. As elsewhere, they relied on force and terrorism to maintain a hated and hateful authority. They broke up the Yugoslav State. The Germans annexed about one half of Slovene territory, and allowed the Italians to take the rest. The Italians treated their new Slovene subjects with some slight consideration. The Germans introduced their familiar machinery of mass murder in an attempt to destroy the whole of the Slovene intelligentsia and the Catholic clergy, and to carry out—in the most cruel conditions—large-scale deportations for forced labour. They also set up an 'independent' Croat State, nominally as a kingdom under the Duke of Spoleto—a member of the house of Savoy—but actually controlled by the terrorist Pavelic with the support of German and Italian troops.<sup>2</sup> With their support Pavelic organised in 1941 a massacre of Croatian Jews and of Serbs, especially in northern and western Bosnia.<sup>3</sup>

A great part of the remainder of the Yugoslav State was partitioned or annexed. Montenegro became an Italian protectorate, though the Italians were not able to exercise much control over it. Yugoslav Macedonia was given to Bulgaria. Serbia itself was held under German military occupation, with a German-controlled government headed, after August, 1941, by the Serbian General Nedic. Nedic

<sup>1</sup> This summary of British policy does not attempt a full analysis of the conditions in Yugoslavia during the period of enemy occupation. It deals with military policy only to the extent necessary to explain the attitude of the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> The new State included the former Croatia-Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and parts of Dalmatia. The greater part of the Dalmatian coast was annexed to Italy.

<sup>3</sup> The number of victims is unknown; the figures are probably not less than 50,000 Jews and between 50,000 and 100,000 Serbs.

was not a "quisling" in the worst sense of the term; he had submitted to the occupying Powers only because he thought that further resistance would mean useless loss of life.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of their organised barbarism, the Axis forces continued to meet civil disobedience, sabotage, and guerrilla opposition in large parts of Yugoslavia to an extent unparalleled in any other occupied country. German ferocity would have driven even a docile people to do what they could to save their lives. The population of Yugoslavia was not docile, and the country, especially in the mountain areas of Serbia, favoured guerrilla activities. Warfare of this kind was familiar to the Serbs. There was in existence an organisation known as the Cetniks<sup>2</sup> dating back to the old fighting between Serbs and Turkish forces. After 1918 this organisation was extended to provide what might be called a guerrilla militia. The Cetniks, however, remained predominantly Serb; owing to their association before 1941 with a centralising and dictatorial government, they were distrusted, particularly in Croatia.

The German victory had been won by rapidly moving armoured columns which had by-passed large numbers of Yugoslav infantry. Many of these latter went home without giving up their arms. Among the officers who escaped capture was a Colonel (later General) Draza Mihailovic, the most prominent Cetnik leader in Serbia, though not the official head of the organisation.<sup>3</sup> General Mihailovic, who had a good record in the first World War, established himself with a small group of followers—officers and men—in the mountains of western Serbia. He was joined by volunteers, and hoped to organise resistance at a favourable time. He regarded immediate insurrection as useless—and here British military policy agreed with him—because it could have little military effect and would lead only to more reprisals against the civil population. General Mihailovic's political views were pan-Serb, and thus unlikely to get him the support of the Croats or Slovenes or indeed of any Yugoslavs—least of all the Communists—who were opposed to a restoration of the pre-war Serbian hegemony.

The German attack on Russia put General Mihailovic in a difficult position. The Yugoslav Communists—an underground party before the war—began to organise guerrilla bands outside the area of Mihailovic's influence. The most important leader among these 'Partisan' groups was a certain Josip Broz, better known under the

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<sup>1</sup> Before Nedic took office the Germans had announced that 100 Serbs would be killed as a reprisal for the killing of any German soldier, and even for the desertion of a local official to the guerrillas.

<sup>2</sup> So-called from Ceta, a band.

<sup>3</sup> The official head, Kosta Pecanac, joined General Nedic. His followers were thus known as 'legal' Cetniks, while those of General Mihailovic were 'illegal' Cetniks.

pseudonym of Tito.<sup>1</sup> The entry of Russia into the war not only changed the attitude of the Yugoslav Communists, but gave the peasantry, who were by tradition Russophil, though not communist, a new hope of liberation. It was thus easy for the Communists to stir up a rising. General Mihailovic on the other hand still regarded a general rising as unlikely to be of serious military value, and certain to provoke fearful reprisals. If, however, he and his Cetnik supporters—he claimed to have about 50,000—took no part in a rising, they would be blamed for its failure and the leadership of guerrilla resistance would pass to the Communists who would then use their position to set up a Communist State after the war. General Mihailovic therefore felt obliged to come forward and take part in the fighting. A broadcast appeal by him was picked up in August, 1941, and in September a British liaison officer, Major (later Colonel) Hudson, was landed on the Montenegrin coast, and made his way to the Cetnik headquarters.

The Foreign Office had little knowledge of what was happening in the mountains of Yugoslavia, but the evidence seemed to shew the beginnings of a revolt almost on a national scale. The Soviet Government also had information about the rebellion; they suggested through M. Maisky that the rebels should be helped and that British and Russian policy towards Yugoslavia should be 'coordinated.' The difficulty was that the Cetniks and Partisans had already begun to fight one another. Such fighting, which reflected bitter feuds of the past and anxieties about the future, was almost inevitable between semi-independent local groups. Each side accused the other of aggression, and in view of the general lack of discipline and the fact that fighting broke out in more than one place, each may have been right. In any case it was clear that the Russians would support the Partisans and that their idea of 'coordinating' British and Russian policy would mean allowing the Partisans to suppress the Cetniks.

On the British side there was more of a conflict between short-term and long-term policy. The military authorities in the Middle East, while taking care to avoid increasing the sufferings of the occupied country, were concerned primarily with short-term factors—that is to say, with securing the greatest damage to enemy communications, etc., and the largest diversion of enemy forces. They therefore inclined, without much regard to political considerations, or, for that matter, without much understanding of them, to support in Yugoslavia the guerrilla groups which were shewing the greatest immediate

<sup>1</sup> Broz-Tito, a Croat of peasant stock, was born in 1892. In his youth he was a metal-worker. He served in the Austrian army in the First World War and was captured by the Russians. He joined the Red Army, and on his return to Croatia became in 1923 one of the organisers of the Yugoslav Communist Party, and was imprisoned for illegal activities. Until the summer of 1941 he took the usual communist line that the war was an imperialist quarrel with which the workers were not concerned.

activity against the enemy. Obviously, at a time when they had very few arms to spare, they wanted to send them where they would be used to effect.

The Foreign Office, on the other hand, had also to consider British long-term interests. It was not in British interests to put the Yugoslav Communists into a position which would enable them, after the war, to transform Yugoslavia into a Communist State under Russian influence. The fact that the communist party was in a small minority was hardly relevant in view of the possibilities open to them if they obtained control of the machinery of State and were free to liquidate their opponents. The British Government were also under an obligation towards King Peter of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Government in exile. There was no question of enforcing after the war the return of a monarchy associated with a dictatorial régime disliked by large numbers of the population. The point was that the question of the post-war régime in Yugoslavia ought not to be prejudiced by handing over control in advance to the Communists. Long-term and short-term British policy therefore coincided at first in aiming at the reconciliation of Cetniks and Partisans which would strengthen their common resistance to the enemy, and avoid the danger of civil war in Yugoslavia after the defeat of the Axis. This policy met with little response because Cetniks and Partisans—Mihailovic and Tito—alike realised that, whereas the war against the Axis could not be won in Yugoslavia, their own local struggle for political control of the country would be decided largely by the respective positions which they could secure for themselves in the hour of liberation.

These considerations led General Mihailovic, in particular, along the dangerous line of suspending action against the Axis and even allowing his subordinates to compromise themselves and him by collaborating with the enemy for the purpose of getting food and also arms which they would use against the Partisans, and, ultimately, against the Germans and Italians who supplied them.<sup>1</sup> The result was that the weight of British military opinion turned more strongly towards the Partisans. The Foreign Office thought that the British military authorities exaggerated the value of the Partisans' activities, but they could not contest the advantages of supporting the resistance groups who were doing the most harm to the enemy. They continued to work for reconciliation, and to give warning that, by supporting Tito against Mihailovic, we should be putting the Communists into a

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<sup>1</sup> In a report of April, 1945, on the disintegration of General Mihailovic's Movement, Colonel F. W. Deakin (see below, p. 337, note 1) pointed out that General Mihailovic and his commanders failed to understand the British view of their 'collaboration'; they believed that the British authorities must share the view that communist control of Yugoslavia was a worse (i.e. because a more lasting) evil than German occupation. General Mihailovic's own words, at his trial in 1946, that he had been 'caught up in a whirlwind' are perhaps the best description of the tragedy of his Movement.



position from which, after the war, they could seize, or rather retain power for themselves alone.

Unfortunately the King and his Government in exile were more of a burden than a help in British attempts to reconcile the Yugoslav factions.<sup>1</sup> The Government was representative of the leading political parties, but there had been no administration on western parliamentary lines—before the *coup d'état* of March 27, 1941—since the establishment of a royal dictatorship in 1929. The politicians who met in London—with time on their hands—maintained only too easily the deep internal dissensions of the previous twelve years. The King was young, inexperienced, and unlikely, by temperament or manner, to win a commanding position for himself.

The Cetniks and Partisans came to an agreement at the end of November, 1941, for common action against the Germans, but the agreement was not kept. As the Germans broke up the rebellion, General Mihailovic retired into the mountains, and reverted to his policy of keeping the Cetniks from any large action.<sup>2</sup> Most of the Partisans were also driven back, and took refuge in the Sanjak. In the spring of 1942, and again in August, the Foreign Office tried to get Russian support in reconciling the two groups. The Russians refused to have anything to do with General Mihailovic and accused him of collaboration with the Italians against the Partisans. The Yugoslav Government in London denied these charges of collaboration, but the Foreign Office had some evidence of them, though it was hard to assess and could be interpreted as part of General Mihailovic's tactics to get supplies and arms in order to keep his guerrilla forces in being. On the other hand, it was clear that General Mihailovic was trying to break up the Partisan groups and that the latter were no less determined to break up the Cetniks. There was also no doubt—though again much of the evidence was unreliable—that the Partisans were more active than the Cetniks in guerrilla attacks and were holding down more enemy divisions.

It was therefore necessary to take into account the risk that, if we continued to support General Mihailovic, and took no account of the Partisans, we should be committing ourselves to his pan-Serb views about the future of Yugoslavia, and thus risking the loss of Yugoslav support outside Serbia in the event of operations in Croatia or on the Dalmatian coast. Since the policy of reconciliation had failed, we might try to get into contact with the Partisans, and thus support both sides—on condition that our support would be withdrawn from

<sup>1</sup> The fact that in January, 1942, the Yugoslav Government in London appointed General Mihailovic Minister of War must have confirmed the general's impression that his policy was understood and approved in London.

<sup>2</sup> On October 21, 1941, the Germans massacred some 7,000 inhabitants (including several hundred schoolchildren) of the Serbian town of Kragujevac as a reprisal for Partisan attacks.

either group if we found it to be using our arms to attack the other. The first stage in this plan was to send British officers into Croatia and Slovenia in order to make contact with the Partisans and judge whether we should send them arms. Since the military authorities wanted the intensification of guerrilla activities as part of the 1943 campaign, the Foreign Office also tried to stir General Mihailovic into action. This step was necessary anyhow since at a meeting of his followers General Mihailovic himself, in the presence of the British liaison officer, Colonel Bailey,<sup>1</sup> had criticised the policy of the British Government, and declared his intention of exterminating the Partisans and using Italian support as long as the Italians remained his only source of assistance.

The Foreign Office therefore instructed Sir G. Rendel, British Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government, to inform the latter that we hoped to increase our supplies to Mihailovic but that we should not do so until we were assured that he was not using them for attacking his fellow-countrymen in collaboration with our Italian enemies. In approving these instructions the Prime Minister agreed that we could not tolerate General Mihailovic's attitude, but noted that, since we could do nothing for him, he might well ask how he was to keep alive until the United Nations could bring some help to him. He was certainly treating us wrongly; the Prime Minister thought that he was also 'double-crossing' the Italians. His position was terrible, and it was not much use preaching to the 'toad under the harrow.'

Early in May the Foreign Office received a copy of the reply sent by General Mihailovic to the Yugoslav Government. The reply was not sufficiently definite, and on May 9, with the approval of the Chiefs of Staff, Mr. Eden (in the Prime Minister's absence) sent another message through the Yugoslav Government insisting that the primary aim of General Mihailovic's policy must be resistance to the Axis; that he must not collaborate with the Italians, or with Nedic; that he must try to arrange collaboration with all other guerrilla groups in Croatia and Slovenia, and to reach agreement with the Partisans in Serbia. Mr. Eden wrote privately to the Yugoslav Prime Minister that, if General Mihailovic rejected these terms, we might have to change our policy. General Mihailovic accepted the terms, but in fact did not undertake any operations against the Germans or Italians. Meanwhile, in view of the strongly expressed wish of the British military authorities in the Middle East, supplies were sent to the Partisans on condition they agreed not to use them in warfare against the Cetniks. At the end of May, 1943, Captain (later Colonel) Deakin<sup>2</sup> had been dropped by parachute in

<sup>1</sup> Colonel S. W. Bailey, who had lived in Yugoslavia since 1928, had been appointed senior liaison officer with General Mihailovic in December, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Deakin was a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

Montenegro, and in July Brigadier Maclean<sup>1</sup> was appointed head of a liaison mission with Tito. Brigadier Maclean arrived in Yugoslavia at the end of September. Late in October he went back to Cairo, where he drew up a report on the Partisan Movement. This report reached the Foreign Office on November 12.

Brigadier Maclean reported that the movement was on a larger scale than the British authorities had previously thought, and that it was likely to be a decisive factor in Yugoslavia after the war. The surrender of Italy had greatly increased the strength of the Partisans, and the amount of arms in their possession. Their organisation was overwhelmingly communist, though they were willing to cooperate with other resistance groups—except those of General Mihailovic. Brigadier Maclean thought that only armed intervention on a large scale would prevent them from taking power after the German withdrawal, and that General Mihailovic, whose policy was pro-Serb and anti-Croat, would be unable, even in the most favourable circumstances, to unite the country.

(ii)

*Further British attempts to secure collaboration between the Royal Yugoslav Government and the Partisans: differences of view between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office: withdrawal of British support from General Mihailovic: Marshal Tito's refusal to allow the return of King Peter to Yugoslavia: meeting between Marshal Tito and M. Subasic.*

Brigadier Maclean's report set the Foreign Office a difficult problem. The Foreign Office thought that the report exaggerated the strength of the Partisans outside Slovenia, Slavonia, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia, but that it shewed the impracticability of supporting both sides in an effort to reconcile them. Brigadier Maclean made it clear that the Partisans were as determined to break up the Cetniks as the latter to destroy the Partisans. The problem therefore was that, if we decided to back General Mihailovic, and not the Partisans, we should be leaving the future régime of Yugoslavia to be decided by civil war, with the chances in favour of the Communists; at least the result would be the division of the country into two states. One of them, comprising Old Serbia, would be agrarian and monarchist, the other, and larger part, would be communist. If, on the other hand, we gave our full support to the Partisans, the most likely result would be a

<sup>1</sup> Mr. (later Brigadier) Maclean had been a member of the Foreign Office staff from 1933 to 1941. He then resigned, joined the army, and also entered Parliament.

unified Communist State, closely linked with the U.S.S.R. and using terrorist methods to suppress opposition.

There seemed no way out of this dilemma. The Foreign Office thought that we might consider the 'bare possibility' of substituting for General Mihailovic some one of more moderate views who might reconcile Cetniks and Partisans in common resistance to the Germans. The matter was now complicated, on the British side, by the visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Cairo while on their way to Teheran. The Prime Minister seems to have been convinced by Brigadier Maclean's arguments that we should abandon General Mihailovic and transfer our full support to Tito even though this action would almost certainly result in a communist control of Serbia. Mr. Churchill, while in Cairo, told King Peter and M. Puric, the Yugoslav Prime Minister,<sup>1</sup> that we had 'irrefutable' evidence of General Mihailovic's collaboration with the enemy, and that in the future we might ask for his dismissal. M. Puric protested most strongly that we should be letting loose a communist régime on Yugoslavia which the peasants would resist in a long and devastating civil war. He blamed British propaganda for the rise of the Partisans to power, and did not accept Mr. Churchill's estimate of the relative strength of the two Movements. When Mr. Churchill said that the Partisans were not held back by threats of reprisals, M. Puric answered that they did not care what happened to the civilian population.

A new and serious difficulty now arose. On November 29, 1943, the Partisans' 'Anti-Fascist Council of National Defence'<sup>2</sup> set up two bodies, a Supreme Legislative Council and an Executive National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia. The latter body was presided over by Tito, who was now given the title of 'Marshal of Yugoslavia.' The Committee was described as having the powers of a temporary government, and its members were allotted posts equivalent to those of Ministers. On December 17 a broadcast from a 'Free Yugoslav' radio station on Soviet territory demanded recognition of the Council as the sole government of Yugoslavia during the war, and the withdrawal of all rights from the government in exile. The Council condemned the Royal Government and General Mihailovic as traitors, and King Peter for supporting them. A copy of the

<sup>1</sup> On August 10, 1943, King Peter had tried to get rid of the factious disputes which were damaging Yugoslav credit. He dismissed the Yugoslav Cabinet, and appointed a 'non-political' administration of officials under M. Puric, a former Yugoslav Minister to France. The King and his Government moved to Cairo in October, 1943, in order to be in close touch with the Yugoslav armed forces and the Allied military authorities. Mr. Stevenson, who had succeeded Sir G. Rendel in August, 1943, as British Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government, went with them to Cairo.

<sup>2</sup> Known from its initial letters as A.V.N.O.J. Tito had called this Council together in October, 1942. Most of its members were Communists, and communist officials were set up in all areas under Partisan control.

resolution of November 29 brought by a Partisan delegate to Cairo stated that the King would not be allowed to return to Yugoslavia.

In these circumstances the Foreign Office felt that we could not ask King Peter to break with General Mihailovic until he (the King) had a guarantee of some arrangement with the Partisans. The Foreign Office therefore suggested—again without much hope—that the King himself might go to Marshal Tito's headquarters, and in due course form a new Government there; obviously General Mihailovic would not be included in it. Mr. Stevenson and Brigadier Maclean thought this plan impracticable. Their view was that we should try for a working arrangement with the Partisans on lines that (i) the latter (and the British Government) should confirm their intention to allow the Yugoslav people a free choice of government after their liberation; meanwhile the Partisans would not ask for immediate formal recognition of their Provisional Government; (ii) the British Government would give full support to the Partisans, and withdraw all support from General Mihailovic, but would continue formally to recognise the King and the Royal Government. Mr. Stevenson telegraphed on December 25 that these proposals were based on three assumptions: (i) the Partisans would be the rulers of Yugoslavia; (ii) they were of such military value to us that we should back them to the full, and subordinate political to military considerations; (iii) the monarchy was probably not a unifying influence in Yugoslavia.

The Foreign Office did not accept these assumptions. They considered that many of the Partisans were loyal to the King and were supporting Marshal Tito, not out of political conviction, but because of his successful resistance to the Germans. They therefore told Mr. Stevenson that they wanted to see whether Marshal Tito would accept their plan that the King should go to Yugoslavia in order to come to an arrangement with the Partisans. The Prime Minister agreed that this proposal should be made to Marshal Tito, but he differed from Mr. Eden in accepting, without qualification, Brigadier Maclean's estimate of the Partisans and their political and military prospects, and in thinking that we should withdraw our missions from General Mihailovic before we had any assurance that Marshal Tito would consent to an arrangement with the King. The Prime Minister was therefore prepared to telegraph to Marshal Tito that, while we could not honourably break with the King, and must remain in official relations with him and his Government, we should have no further dealings with General Mihailovic, and had asked the Royal Government to dismiss him.<sup>1</sup> After

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill proposed to add: 'I hope that there may be an end to the polemics on either side once Mihailovic has been turned out as he has richly deserved to be.'

considerable persuasion, the Prime Minister agreed to a suggestion from Mr. Eden that his message should be amended to read 'give no further military support to Mihailovic . . . and we should be glad if the Royal Yugoslav Government would dismiss him from their councils.'<sup>1</sup>

On January 12, 1944, the Foreign Office received a full report from S.O.E.<sup>2</sup> in Cairo on the evidence against General Mihailovic. This evidence was that some of the General's commanders had collaborated with the Germans or Italians—or both—and that General Mihailovic himself had condoned and in certain cases approved their action. There was also evidence that in March, 1943, he had directed operations in the Neretva valley against the Partisans in collaboration with an Axis offensive against them. In all cases this collaboration had been against other Yugoslavs, and had been accepted as a means of fighting what was, in fact, a civil war *à l'outrance* in Yugoslavia.<sup>3</sup> For the time, however, the problem was how to get rid of General Mihailovic without giving Marshal Tito, indirectly, a complete victory in this civil war. The Prime Minister had not made a solution of this problem easier by entering into direct correspondence with Marshal Tito, and thereby increasing his status. Furthermore Mr. Churchill told Brigadier Maclean that he could use his discretion about the timing of the King's return. Since the Marshal was unlikely to raise the question himself, we should have nothing to offer the King in return for his abandonment of the only people of Yugoslavia who remained loyal to him. When the Prime Minister came back to London Mr. Eden suggested to him that we should instruct Brigadier Maclean to say to Marshal Tito at once that, if he would agree to discuss collaboration with the King, we would tell the King that he must dismiss General Mihailovic.

The Prime Minister would not agree to these instructions. He still thought that the King should get rid of General Mihailovic before putting any question to Marshal Tito. Mr. Churchill received an answer to his message to Marshal Tito in friendly but non-committal

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<sup>1</sup> The words 'no further military support' were suggested by General Wilson, whom the Prime Minister had advised Mr. Eden to consult. General Wilson was opposed to a complete breach with General Mihailovic. He thought that the Cetniks at least were holding down two Bulgarian divisions. For the text of the Prime Minister's message as finally sent, see Churchill, V, 416-7.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 353, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> In September, 1944, the Foreign Office received from the United States Office of Strategic Services a collection of 53 captured Cetnik documents dating from July, 1942, to April, 1943. These documents showed that the local Cetnik commanders in areas outside Serbia were working with enemy forces. The commanders concerned seemed to be acting with General Mihailovic's approval, though they were not operating directly under his command. The general impression given by these documents confirmed the view of the Foreign Office that General Mihailovic's collaboration with the Axis was determined—and limited—by his conception that his first duty was to prevent a communist control of Yugoslavia after the war.



terms that he (Marshal Tito) understood our engagements towards the King and his Government, but that the internal political situation represented the 'irresistible desire of all patriots.' Mr. Churchill telegraphed in reply on the night of February 5-6 that he understood Marshal Tito's position of reserve with regard to the King, and that he had been in favour for several months past of asking the King to dismiss General Mihailovic. He had not taken this step because it would have meant advising the King—for whom he felt a personal responsibility—to break with his only supporters. The Prime Minister therefore asked Marshal Tito directly whether the dismissal of General Mihailovic would make friendly relations possible between the King and the Partisans, and allow the King, later on, to return to Yugoslavia, on the understanding that the future of the monarchy would not be decided until after the liberation of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Marshal Tito's answer was that the Yugoslav Government in Cairo must be dissolved, and General Mihailovic dismissed, and that the Allies must recognise the National Council of Liberation as the sole government of Yugoslavia. On these conditions the National Council would not refuse to cooperate with the King, but the question of the future of the monarchy would have to stand over until after the liberation of the country. A special arrangement with the King during the war would cause 'serious anxiety and suspicion' in Yugoslavia.

Brigadier Maclean considered that the King should accept these terms, but the Foreign Office was unwilling to treat Marshal Tito's answer as final, or to advise the King to agree to his demands, which meant imposing the Partisan government on the whole of Serbia, in return for nothing more than an offer to discuss cooperation. We had to give Marshal Tito military support because he was fighting the Germans (as well as the Cetniks) but we had no reason for believing that the majority of the population of Yugoslavia wanted either his government or his politics. The Prime Minister suggested that he should ask Marshal Tito for an assurance that, after the King had freed himself from General Mihailovic and 'other bad advisers,' he would be invited to join his countrymen in the field. The Foreign Office pointed out that Marshal Tito had already rejected the Prime Minister's proposal, and that we could not recognise the Yugoslav National Council as the sole government without contradicting our assertion that the Yugoslav people should be free to choose their own government as soon as conditions allowed. Until free elections could be held in Yugoslavia we had to work for a Provisional Government including all sections of opinion opposed to the existing German domination. The Prime Minister agreed that instructions should be sent to Brigadier Maclean that we wished Marshal Tito to accept the return of King Peter to Yugoslavia where he would form a new

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this correspondence, see Churchill, V, 417-9.

government under the presidency of the Marshal, and consisting mainly of members of the National Council, but with the addition of representatives of all other Yugoslav groups opposed to the Germans. The composition of this government must be acceptable to the King as well as to Marshal Tito. We should recognise such a government, and regard it as provisional only in the sense that the Yugoslav people would have a right to settle their own government by free election after the war.<sup>1</sup>

These instructions were sent to Brigadier Maclean on March 9. Marshal Tito's answer—received on March 15—was that he would consider extending the basis of his government<sup>2</sup> to include representatives at present outside Yugoslavia, but that the decision of the National Council did not allow the return of the King. The King's long connexion with the Puric Government and General Mihailovic had discredited him, and it would be some time before the Partisans accepted the idea of cooperation and reconciliation. In reply to another message from the Prime Minister, Marshal Tito repeated on March 27 that the National Council would not accept the return of the King.

Meanwhile the Secretary of State had been trying to get the King<sup>3</sup> to form a new government. At the end of March, after receiving Marshal Tito's uncompromising reply, Mr. Eden suggested that the King should issue a declaration that all internal issues should be postponed until the end of the war; that the Yugoslav people must then be free to decide on their régime, and that he would accept their decision. Mr. Eden did not think much of the King's prospects of making an arrangement with Marshal Tito, but his delays were losing him any chance of a bargain. Among the new personalities for inclusion in a new government the Foreign Office recommended M. Subasic.<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister, who still thought that the King

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons (Parl. Deb. 5th ser., H. of C., vol. 397, cols. 692-9) on February 22 on the position in Poland, Yugoslavia, and Greece. He shewed the draft of his statement to Mr. Eden. Mr. Eden suggested that he should be less strong in his praise of Marshal Tito, since we did not want him to think that we were already so much pleased with him that he need make no concessions with regard to co-operation with the King.

<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office were uncertain whether Brigadier Maclean had explained to Marshal Tito that we were proposing, not that he should strengthen his existing Committee, but that the King should form a new government in Yugoslavia with which Marshal Tito should be associated. Brigadier Maclean reported on March 20 that Marshal Tito understood our proposal.

<sup>3</sup> The King had returned from Cairo to England for his marriage with Princess Alexandra of Greece. There were considerable political objections to this marriage, but the Foreign Office held the view that the marriage would have no influence either way on the prospects of the King's return to Yugoslavia.

<sup>4</sup> M. Subasic had been appointed Ban (roughly, Viceroy) of Croatia after a decree of August, 1939, granting a measure of autonomy to Croatia. He had taken considerable part in the negotiations leading to the decree. M. Subasic had left Yugoslavia in 1941, and had been living in the United States, where he had been trying to secure unity among the different Yugoslav groups. M. Subasic supported the monarchy as the only régime likely to secure the unification of the country.

should have dissociated himself unconditionally from General Mihailovic, lost patience with his hesitation to get rid of his 'present millstone advisers', and at the end of April suggested to Mr. Eden that if the King did not take some vigorous action, we should tell him that we would recognise Marshal Tito's Committee as a government.<sup>1</sup> The King finally agreed to ask that M. Subasic should be invited to come to London from the United States. M. Subasic reached London on May 9, and put his views to King Peter. The King accepted M. Subasic's advice that he should form a small government of a non-political character.<sup>2</sup> He could not get the Serb politicians to support this government, but none the less appointed M. Subasic as Prime Minister on June 1.

At this time a determined raid by the Germans on Marshal Tito's headquarters compelled him to take refuge in the island of Vis on the Adriatic coast. British forces were landed on the island in order to secure his safety. The Prime Minister now thought that the King should go to see Marshal Tito at Vis, but the Foreign Office were less sure that Marshal Tito would agree to reverse the decision of his provisional government about the King's return. Marshal Tito realised that we could not throw him over, and that we did not want to drive him completely into the hands of the Russians.

Hence M. Subasic left London on June 10 for Vis, while the King, who went with him, did not go beyond Malta. M. Subasic came to an arrangement with Marshal Tito on June 16. Under this agreement the National Liberation Committee stated that the question of the monarchy was not to be considered an obstacle to collaboration between the Committee and the Royal Government, since both sides had accepted the principle that the people of Yugoslavia should decide after the war on the organisation of the State. Marshal Tito agreed to issue a declaration to this effect. Meanwhile the Royal Government would recognise the 'provisional administration now

<sup>1</sup> On April 17 the Prime Minister circulated to the War Cabinet a despatch from Brigadier Maclean on the military situation in Yugoslavia. The Foreign Office, while agreeing that Brigadier Maclean was providing valuable information, did not think this report altogether convincing. Brigadier Maclean anticipated the ultimate success of the Partisans, and assumed that this success would be in accordance with British interests, i.e. that it would lead to the establishment of a strong, democratic, and independent Yugoslavia. Mr. Stevenson minuted the despatch to the effect that Brigadier Maclean did not mention Serbia, where, according to our information, opposition to the Partisans was 'solid and uncompromising.' Mr. Eden thought it desirable to let the War Cabinet have a report from Colonel Hudson, received about this same time. Colonel Hudson, and, in another report, Colonel Bailey mentioned the anti-communist feelings of the people of Serbia.

<sup>2</sup> M. Subasic insisted on the dismissal of General Mihailovic from the Ministry of War and pointed out that the King was himself Commander-in-Chief, and could restrict General Mihailovic's command to that of the Royal forces in Serbia. The King had informed the British Government earlier of his intention to dismiss the Government. The Prime Minister sent a message to Marshal Tito informing him of the fact, and asking him not to make any unfavourable comment but to allow some time for the King's action to develop favourably. For the text of this message, see Churchill, V, 422-3.

established in the country' as the executive organ of the Committee. Marshal Tito gave M. Subasic an assurance that he did not intend to impose communism on the Yugoslavs after the war. He repeated this assurance to Mr. Stevenson, and asked him to do his best to convince the British Government of his sincerity. Mr. Stevenson thought that Marshal Tito meant what he said.

The Foreign Office did not feel enthusiastic about this arrangement, though they regarded it as all that could have been expected. There was no reference in it to a possible return of the King, and the renunciation of 'compulsory communism' was only a verbal promise. The Foreign Office, with the approval of the Prime Minister, considered that the King ought now to see Marshal Tito, but the Marshal thought it better to wait until the agreement had had time to affect opinion in Yugoslavia. The Foreign Office were also concerned about the position of the Serbs. Marshal Tito had agreed with M. Subasic to appoint a Serb from Serbia<sup>1</sup> as liaison officer between the Committee and the Royal Government, and to allow Yugoslav soldiers joining the Partisans to wear, if they wished, the Yugoslav cockade and not the Red Star (i.e. the Royal and not the Partisan emblem), but M. Subasic himself seemed to imply that the Cetniks in Serbia would soon be supplanted by the Partisans.<sup>2</sup>

(iii)

*The Prime Minister's meeting with Marshal Tito, August 13-14, 1944: Marshal Tito's 'disappearance': agreement between Marshal Tito and M. Subasic over a United Yugoslav Government: King Peter's refusal to accept the agreement: recognition of the agreement at the Yalta Conference: formation of a United Yugoslav Government in March, 1945.*

Marshal Tito, although he was still living under British protection at Vis, now refused to attend a meeting at Caserta with M. Subasic which General Wilson had arranged at his (Marshal Tito's) request. Brigadier Maclean considered that the refusal was due to pressure from the National Committee, which in turn had found the agreement with M. Subasic unpopular especially in Croatia and Slovenia. The Prime Minister thought it desirable to talk to Marshal Tito while

<sup>1</sup> i.e. Old Serbia, not Bosnia.

<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office was also disconcerted to find that Brigadier Maclean appeared to have told Marshal Tito that we wished him to extend the scope of his Movement in Serbia, and that Marshal Tito was now sending two extreme communist members of his Committee into the country. Mr. Eden telegraphed to Brigadier Maclean that our policy was not to help Marshal Tito impose his Movement on Serbia, but to promote cooperation between him and the Serbs.

in Italy.<sup>1</sup> He told him that we wanted a reconciliation between the Partisans and the Serbs, and that we had obligations to the King. Marshal Tito said that he could do nothing about the question of the King until after the war, but that he was not intending to introduce a communist system into Yugoslavia. The Prime Minister asked whether he would make a public declaration to this effect. Marshal Tito excused himself on the ground that a public declaration might appear to have been forced upon him. The Prime Minister then explained that he might include in the declaration which he had promised to make, as part of the agreement with M. Subasic, a statement about communism and also an undertaking not to use armed force to influence the decision of the Yugoslav people about their future régime.

After the meeting the Prime Minister sent Marshal Tito a letter setting out the British requirements.<sup>2</sup> This letter referred to the statements which we wished Marshal Tito to include in his declaration, and suggested again that he should meet the King, preferably on Yugoslav territory. The letter also warned Marshal Tito that we could not allow British arms sent to him to be used for 'fratricidal strife' other than in self-defence. Marshal Tito agreed to make the declaration, but would not meet the King. Meanwhile he shewed that he was putting forward territorial claims. He objected to proposals from General Wilson that, in the event of an Allied advance, Istria should be put under Allied military administration 'until its disposition had been determined by the governments concerned.' The Prime Minister pointed out to him that the Allies could not prejudice the status of Istria. They might remove it from Italian sovereignty, but the matter could not be settled until the Peace Conference, or, if there were no peace conference, until there had been a meeting of the principal Allied Powers at which the Yugoslavs could state their claims.

The Prime Minister was not favourably impressed with Marshal Tito or his demands. He wrote a minute to Mr. Eden on August 31 that a great responsibility would rest on us after the war when all the arms in Yugoslavia—supplied by us—would be in Marshal Tito's possession, and could be used by him to subjugate the country. Mr. Eden noted on this minute that the Foreign Office hardly needed a reminder of this danger, and that, in spite of their warnings, the Prime Minister himself had persistently 'pushed Tito.' Mr. Eden replied to the Prime Minister that the extent to which Marshal Tito would keep to his assurances would depend largely on the attitude of the Russians who were now close to the Yugoslav frontier. Mr. Eden therefore thought it necessary to put our case plainly to Stalin.

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister went to Italy on August 11. For a summary of the record of this meeting, see Churchill, VI, 79–84.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this letter, see Churchill, VI, 82–3.

The need for agreement with the Russians was urgent because there was more evidence that Marshal Tito was trying to elude his agreement with M. Subasic. M. Subasic had sent him a message on August 31 pointing out that the entire Balkan area, including Yugoslavia, might be liberated within a few weeks. It was therefore necessary to know whether a single united Yugoslav government could then be formed. Marshal Tito's reply, which reached London on September 7, was, as the Foreign Office expected, unsatisfactory. He evaded the question of a united government, or rather, referred to it as 'unimportant' at a time when the Partisans were fighting 'exceptionally hard battles' against the Germans.<sup>1</sup> He asked for more arms, and for the immediate use of the Royal Yugoslav navy. On September 18 Marshal Tito replied to a letter from Mr. Eden supporting M. Subasic's appeal. He said that the time had not yet come for a united government; the National Committee exercised full authority throughout the country and was competent to finish the war of liberation.

On the night of September 18-19 Marshal Tito disappeared from Vis in a Russian aeroplane. His Chief of Staff said that he had gone to Serbia, but the British authorities believed—rightly—that he was in Russia. Mr. Eden, in accordance with his message to the Prime Minister, had already asked Sir A. Clark Kerr to try to get Russian support for a united government in Yugoslavia. The chances of securing this support were not high. Hitherto the Soviet Government had been less than friendly toward M. Subasic. They had refused a suggestion from him that he should visit Moscow, and, although M. Subasic's Government appointed an Ambassador to Moscow, the Russians did not make any appointment to the Yugoslav Government in London. The Soviet High Command came to an agreement with the National Committee about the entry of Soviet troops into Yugoslav territory, but said nothing about it to the Royal Government. The Foreign Office were afraid that they might be intending to install in Belgrade a government under Marshal Tito which would ignore the King, M. Subasic, and the Royal Government in London.

The discussion over 'percentages' at the meeting in October between Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden, and the Russians was thus of immediate relevance.<sup>2</sup> M. Molotov told Mr. Eden of Marshal Tito's visit to Moscow, and Mr. Eden complained strongly that we had not been given earlier information. M. Molotov agreed—on the '50-50' basis—to send joint messages to M. Subasic and the Marshal that the

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office thought that Marshal Tito's claim to be fighting 'exceptionally hard battles' was exaggerated. For the activities of the Partisans at this time, see *Grand Strategy*, VI, ch. II, especially pp. 43-7.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 307-8. In explaining the agreement about percentages to the War Cabinet, Mr. Churchill said, *inter alia*, that it was intended to prevent civil war in Yugoslavia. Churchill, VI, 204.



British and Soviet Governments hoped for an agreement between them. Marshal Tito—on his return from Moscow—had invited M. Subasic to Yugoslavia. Here at Belgrade a second agreement was reached on the lines that the King should appoint a Council of three Regents to represent him in Yugoslavia pending a decision on the ultimate form of government. The Regents would set up a government of eighteen Ministers chosen from the Royal Government and the Committee; this government would hold a plebiscite about the régime. The King would not be allowed to go to Yugoslavia before the plebiscite. Brigadier Maclean reported these arrangements on October 29. Further details within the next few days shewed that the Regents would be nonentities—one of them, a Serb, was ninety years old<sup>1</sup>—and that M. Subasic would merely be a member of a government in which Marshal Tito would be Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Commander-in-Chief. The government would consist of twenty-eight—not eighteen—members, of whom five would be M. Subasic and his present colleagues. Since two of these colleagues were representatives of the Partisans,<sup>2</sup> Marshal Tito would have a majority of twenty-five to three.

The Foreign Office did not think it possible to get anything more satisfactory. Moreover M. Subasic himself now disappeared for ten days without leaving word of his whereabouts. He too went to Moscow. The Russians, however, accepted the proposed new agreement, as well they might, since it gave them all they needed to ensure communist control of Yugoslavia. They did not object to a strong message from the Prime Minister to Marshal Tito that before we could endorse the new agreement we must be assured that the elections in Yugoslavia would really be free. Marshal Tito himself gave this assurance, and a supplementary agreement on December 7 with M. Subasic laid down that, instead of a plebiscite, elections for a Constituent Assembly to decide the future régime should take place within three months of the total liberation of the country.

On December 21 the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden advised King Peter to accept the terms of the Tito-Subasic agreement, since the Regency plan was the only way of keeping the principle of monarchy alive in a country where a revolution was taking place. The King produced constitutional arguments against the plan, but, as Mr. Eden explained to the War Cabinet, the realities of the situation were that Marshal Tito was in possession of Yugoslavia and could choose whether or not the monarchy should be restored. The King, after

<sup>1</sup> This nomination was subsequently changed.

<sup>2</sup> Under the earlier agreement two representatives of the Partisans, a Serb from Bosnia and a Slovene had joined the Royal Government.

more hesitation, decided to issue a communiqué on January 11, 1945, stating his objections. He came to this decision apparently on the advice of his mother-in-law, Princess Aspasia of Greece, and without consulting M. Subasic, Mr. Churchill, or Mr. Eden.

The Foreign Office at once let Marshal Tito and the Russians know that we considered the King's action as not binding, since he had taken it without consulting his Prime Minister, and that we should support Marshal Tito and M. Subasic in putting the new government into office. M. Subasic tried to persuade the King to accept the agreement, but the King refused his advice. Mr. Churchill instructed Mr. Stevenson on January 21 to tell the King that, if he did not accept the agreement within forty-eight hours, we should ask M. Subasic and his Government to go to Belgrade and set up the Regency. The King made an excuse for not seeing Mr. Stevenson, and Mr. Eden then told Mr. Stevenson not to make any move in the matter. On the night of January 22-23 King Peter dismissed M. Subasic and his Government.

The Foreign Office telegraphed to Washington and Moscow that we should continue to recognise M. Subasic's Government and to see that the agreement was implemented. At the Yalta Conference Mr. Eden suggested that Stalin might ask Marshal Tito to give assurances (i) that the National Council should be enlarged to include members of the last Yugoslav Parliament who had not compromised themselves with the enemy; the enlarged Council could then serve as a temporary Parliament, (ii) that the legislative acts of the Council should be subject to ratification by the Constituent Assembly, and (iii) that the government formed under the agreement would last only until there had been a free expression of the will of the people.

The Russians, as usual, tried to prevent any binding statements; M. Molotov argued that the third requirement would be 'humiliating' to the Yugoslav people. Finally, they conceded that as soon as the new government had been formed, it should issue a declaration covering the first two of Mr. Eden's points. M. Subasic and the new Ministers from London left for Belgrade on February 15; at the beginning of March, after somewhat difficult negotiations, he and Marshal Tito agreed upon the composition of the Regency Council and the United Yugoslav Government. The King finally accepted the proposals under strong British pressure. The Prime Minister had suggested to Mr. Eden that the King should be told that, if he continued his obstruction, we should ask him to leave the country.

The Regency Council took the oath at Belgrade on March 4, and the formation of the new Government was announced two days later. On March 14, 1945, the British Embassy at Belgrade was reopened.

## CHAPTER XVIII

British policy towards Greece from the capitulation of  
the Greek army to the Varkiza Agreement of February,  
1945

(i)

*The policy of 'reconciliation' in Greece: the rise of the communist-controlled E.A.M.-E.L.A.S.: British military support of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. (April, 1941-June, 1943).*

IN the case of Greece as of Yugoslavia the British Government at first supported an exiled king and government in the expectation or at least the hope that they would be received back after the war and that any demands for constitutional change—such demands were, indeed, likely—would be met in an orderly way through the procedure of free elections. British policy could hardly have been otherwise at the time when the Yugoslav and Greek Governments were driven by the enemy out of their respective countries, but this policy in fact assumed a greater measure of political agreement on 'fundamentals' than was the case either in Yugoslavia or in Greece. In both countries the political régime before the war was unpopular among large sections of the population. After the entry of Russia into the war the Communists, who had already been driven underground by the dictatorial methods of their own pre-war governments, set themselves to dominate the Resistance Movements. The communist leaders were trained, and instructed a sufficient number of their followers, in the methods by which a small and ruthless political minority can dominate a politically inexperienced majority. If, on military grounds, British support were given to these groups the policy of support for the exiled sovereigns and their governments had little chance of success. The Foreign Office had pointed out this fact again and again in the case of Yugoslavia. If the Greek left-wing parties had produced a leader as able as Marshal Tito, British policy towards Greece might have ended in an unwilling acceptance of a communist régime imposed on a population which, as in Yugoslavia, was for the most part non-communist. On the other hand it might be argued that, if Belgrade had been as accessible as Athens to a small British force of occupation, the course of events in Yugoslavia would have been different. At all events, as

things were, the British Government were able to carry through their policy in Greece. They had to use force, but there is no doubt that the great majority of the Greek nation welcomed their interference, and that this interference prevented an even more devastating civil war and allowed the Greeks a freedom which they would not otherwise have had to choose a government for themselves.

At the end of June, 1941, the Greek King and his Government left Egypt for Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> Since it was impracticable at that time to send them by the Mediterranean, they went by the Cape and did not reach England until September 22, 1941. A month after their arrival they announced that the Metaxas régime was at an end, and the constitutional rights of Greeks restored. They took this action, on British advice, in order to satisfy Greek public opinion. The death of General Metaxas on January 29, 1941, had in fact meant the collapse of his régime since there was no other Greek capable of exercising his authority. The British Government, on November 25, 1941, gave M. Tsouderos, the Greek Prime Minister, an *aide-mémoire* reaffirming their hope that, at the end of the war, the King would be welcomed back to Greece, and referring to the importance of establishing a liberal and representative constitution. Early in 1942 the Greek Government, again with British support, issued another statement that the system of personal dictatorship had been set aside. In order to leave no doubt about his own position the King signed on February 4 a Constitutional Act declaring invalid General Metaxas' decree of August, 1936, which had suspended the main provisions of the Greek constitution of 1911.

There was at this time some reason to hope that the British policy of conciliation might succeed in spite of the unpopularity of the King owing to his association with the dictatorship. At all events the Germans had failed to get any collaborators of real importance into a puppet government which they had set up within a few days of their occupation. The Germans and Italians had done nothing to relieve the severe famine in Greece during the winter of 1941-2,<sup>2</sup> and the population was unlikely to be taken in by Axis propaganda. In any case the area of effective enemy occupation was limited to the coastal zone, the few large towns, and the main line of communication north from Attica. The Germans and Italians made little attempt, except

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 139. The King and Government went back to Cairo in April, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> The famine was due to German and Italian requisitioning, the cutting off of imports by the blockade, and the refusal of Germany and inability of Italy to send supplies. The decision of the War Cabinet on January, 1942, to allow the import of wheat was the one substantial breach, for relief purposes, in the blockade during the war. The most important single contribution of wheat came from Canada. For the history of Greek relief, see Medlicott, II, ch. ix.

by occasional raids, to control the central region from Florina to the Parnassus range. This area, and to a lesser extent the Peloponnese, therefore gave excellent opportunity for the organisation of the guerrilla bands which in Greece, as in Serbia, had been associated with the war of liberation.

From the latter part of 1942 these guerrilla bands consisted of two main groups, known from the initial letters of their names as E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S.<sup>1</sup> E.L.A.S. was the military counterpart of a political organisation known as E.A.M.<sup>2</sup> which claimed to be a federation of left-wing parties, but was, mainly, a 'cover' for the executive of the Greek communist party (K.K.E.). The communist party was small, though it attracted landless agricultural labourers as well as the poorer classes in the towns. The Communists at first had supported national resistance to the Italians. In January, 1941, they received orders from Moscow to denounce this resistance as 'fascist aggression' and to encourage military desertion. The order was not generally obeyed or even circulated. Hence it was easier for the party to turn round after the German attack on Russia. Furthermore, in the confusion of the spring of 1941, most of the Communists had escaped. They formed a tough nucleus for E.A.M. and E.L.A.S., and soon manoeuvred themselves into a position for setting up a communist dictatorship after the war. As their control grew stronger, they began to use terrorist methods among the population in their areas.

E.D.E.S. was strongly anti-communist. It was a much smaller organisation than E.L.A.S. and its 5,000 or so members came mainly from Epirus. Their commander, Colonel Zervas, was pro-British, though he regarded the support given by the British authorities to E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. as a menace to the future peace of Greece.<sup>3</sup> His own political views were not favourable to the return of the monarchy. British liaison officers were sent to E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. in the summer of 1942 for the organisation of sabotage. After the German retreat from Libya the supply route for their armies through Greece was less important, but the British military authorities continued to regard the Greek guerrillas as of value in occupying large enemy forces. E.L.A.S., who were working east of the Pindus range, had the more important area, and secured the larger share of British arms and money. They used both arms and money for eliminating their rivals. Hence, as in the case of Yugoslavia, there was a conflict between British short-term and long-term policy. The Foreign Office considered that the 'build-up' of a strong Greek Government was far

<sup>1</sup> E.L.A.S. = 'National People's Liberation Army.'

E.D.E.S. = 'National Democratic People's Army.'

<sup>2</sup> E.A.M. = 'National Liberation Front.'

<sup>3</sup> There was only one other guerrilla organisation of any importance. This organisation, known as E.K.K.A., was politically close to E.D.E.S. E.K.K.A. was violently attacked twice by E.L.A.S. in 1943 and finally destroyed by them in 1944.

more important than the temporary damage which could be done by guerrilla sabotage at a time when we could not directly threaten the Axis position in Greece. They pointed out that the British organisation<sup>1</sup> set up to deal with resistance movements was, in fact, working against the policy of reconciliation approved by the War Cabinet, since it was assisting, by its gifts of arms and money, the communist opposition to the King and Government. The military authorities in the Middle East, however, took a much higher view than the Foreign Office of the value of the guerrilla operations, and strongly opposed cutting them down for political reasons. The Foreign Office therefore could do no more than secure that instructions were given to the British liaison officers working with the Greeks that, subject to special operational necessity, they should support the groups favourable to the King and his Government, and should make clear to the anti-monarchical groups that our policy aimed at a strong and united Greek Government on a broad democratic basis.

## (ii)

*Foreign Office proposals for the withdrawal of support from E.A.M.-E.L.A.S.: the Greek King's refusal to give the pledges required under the British proposals: the Merokovo and Lebanon Conferences (July, 1943-August, 1944).*

On July 4, 1943, the King broadcast a declaration that, as soon as conditions allowed, and not less than six months after the liberation of the country, free elections would be held for a Constituent Assembly. This announcement, which was endorsed by Mr. Eden in the House of Commons on July 7, coincided with an agreement, known as the 'National Bands Agreement,' between E.A.M.-E.L.A.S., E.D.E.S. and E.K.K.A. which had been under negotiation for some time through the influence of Brigadier Myers, Chief British Liaison Officer in Greece. Unfortunately the acceptance of this agreement was merely a tactical move on the part of the leaders of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. They seem to have planned a communist *coup d'état* earlier in 1943 in the expectation that the Russians would soon reach the Balkans. Their violence and extremist aims caused a reaction against them, and they realised that the Allied forces of the Middle East and not the Red Army were likely to liberate Greece. Hence they seized the chance of rehabilitating themselves both with the Greek people

<sup>1</sup> This organisation—known as Special Operations Executive—was formed in 1940 under the direction of Mr. Hugh Dalton, at that time Minister for Economic Warfare. Lord Selborne succeeded Mr. Dalton in February, 1942. I have not dealt here with the relations between the Foreign Office and S.O.E.



and the British authorities upon whom hitherto they had depended for supplies.

The E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. leaders soon broke their agreement. They disarmed—against Allied orders—an Italian division which had come over to the Allies with the intention of fighting as co-belligerents against the Germans. With these and other arms from Italian sources E.L.A.S. set about liquidating the non-communist bands and thus establishing their control before the liberation which they assumed to be close at hand.<sup>1</sup> General Wilson made a broadcast denouncing their attacks,<sup>2</sup> but to no effect.

Mr. Eden discussed the situation with the British authorities in Cairo on his way to and from the Moscow Conference. On November 14, after his return to London, he submitted a memorandum to the War Cabinet suggesting important changes in policy. He considered that E.L.A.S. was of little value against the Germans, since their leaders would not risk any serious engagement. We ought therefore to withdraw support from them and try to win over the non-communist majority. Owing to the King's unpopularity, we were unlikely to get the support of moderate opinion unless we made it clear that we did not intend to force his return. Hence we should advise the King to give a public pledge not to return to Greece until the constitutional issue had been settled by a plebiscite or by elections to a Constituent Assembly. If we were to make this recommendation to the King, we must try to safeguard his interests. The only effective safeguard would be for the King, at the time of the liberation of the country, to nominate a Council of Regency which would hold office until the Greek people had come to a decision about the régime. Mr. Eden thought that Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens<sup>3</sup> might be a leading member of such a Council.<sup>4</sup>

The War Cabinet considered this memorandum on November 16. Mr. Eden repeated his view that we ought to break with the leaders

<sup>1</sup> In a report of August 9, 1943, Mr. (at this time, Major) Wallace, formerly press attaché at the British Embassy in Athens, estimated that E.L.A.S. had about 15,000 guerrillas fully mobilised, and was thus about three times as strong as E.D.E.S. Their leadership was about 90 per cent communist, but the rank and file were about 90 per cent non-communist, and in many areas under exclusive E.L.A.S. control the population was strongly opposed to them.

<sup>2</sup> One British officer was killed, and others maltreated by E.L.A.S.

<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Damaskinos had been elected to the See of Athens under the Metaxas régime; General Metaxas had refused to recognise his election. The Germans had installed him in place of Metaxas' candidate, but he had behaved with courage and independence towards them, and had gained general public respect. He was on good terms with all the Greek political parties, including E.A.M., and, at the same time, had been able to keep himself free from political commitments.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Eden also suggested that, since we could not liberate Greece at once, we should try to increase the distribution of food by the Swedish-Swiss Red Cross organisation, and also ensure that we had stocks of food and other supplies to bring into the country.

of E.A.M. and E.L.A.S., but the Chief of the Imperial General Staff argued that this plan would be contrary to our military interests. Three days later the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, reported that, although the future value of E.L.A.S. was likely to be small, they would probably support us passively, and that the best solution (which had been suggested by Mr. R. A. Leeper, British Ambassador to the Greek Government in exile) would be to tell the King that we would withdraw our support from E.L.A.S. on the understanding that he would not return to Greece until invited to do so by a representative Greek Government after the liberation of the country. Meanwhile we should incorporate E.D.E.S. bands in the Greek regular army, explain to E.L.A.S. what we were doing, and why, and invite their members also to join the Greek army.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, during their visit to the Middle East for the Cairo and Teheran Conferences, strongly advised the King to agree to this plan. Unfortunately, President Roosevelt, who also saw the King in Cairo, recommended him not to accept it.<sup>1</sup> In the end, however, the King agreed to a compromise. He had already written to M. Tsouderos a letter for communication to the Greek Cabinet that, at the moment of liberation, and in the light of the conditions then prevailing, he would reconsider the date of his return to Greece. He was now willing to add that his decision would be taken in agreement with his Government. He also agreed that he and his Government should be represented in Athens by Archbishop Damaskinos and a secret committee.

Since the King refused to go as far as the public pledge for which the British Government had asked, it was impossible to carry out the other part of the plan, i.e. a break with the E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. The alternative was to work once again for a united front, though the chances of it were even less favourable. The first step was to secure agreement between E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S.<sup>2</sup> The Communist leaders were prepared to discuss an agreement—on terms favourable to themselves—since, although they could add to the troubles of their fellow-countrymen by civil war, they had found that they were not strong enough to destroy their rivals altogether.

The Greek leaders met early in February, 1944, at Merokovo<sup>3</sup> in the Pindus. Colonel Woodhouse, who had succeeded Brigadier Myers as Chief British Liaison Officer, represented the Allied military

<sup>1</sup> The President's action was the more surprising because the State Department fully supported the plan. The President complained that the British Government had not consulted him about the new policy. This complaint was contrary to the facts. The President himself had seen the British proposals before they were submitted to the King. Mr. Eden had also spoken about them at length to Mr. Winant and Mr. Hopkins.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Zervas, who had broken with the political leaders of E.D.E.S. on the ground that they were collaborating with the puppet government, now gave his followers the title of 'National Bands.'

<sup>3</sup> The agreement was in fact signed at a bridge leading to the adjacent village of Plaka.

authorities. E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. wanted the amalgamation of the guerilla forces on terms which would put them under the control of the E.A.M. central committee, but Colonel Woodhouse persuaded them to accept a resolution—to which the other parties had already agreed—providing that each group should normally keep to its own territory. This agreement was greatly to the advantage of the E.A.M.-E.L.A.S., because they were holding, after the withdrawal of the Italian garrisons, a much wider territory than the other groups. No agreement was reached on the powers of a Commander-in-Chief or the composition and functions of a committee to discuss with M. Tsouderos the formation of a National Government.

Meanwhile M. Tsouderos had been trying to bring to Cairo from Athens the leading members of the parliamentary parties existing before the dictatorship, and to form a broad national administration. After some delay, Archbishop Damaskinos, who was acting on M. Tsouderos' behalf, reported that all parties in Athens agreed that the King should sign, at once, a constitutional act appointing the Archbishop as Regent at the time of liberation and until the Greek people had decided upon his (the King's) return. M. Tsouderos accepted this proposal and said that he would try to open negotiations with the parties of the Left over the question of broadening the Cairo Government. The King, however, on March 13, told M. Tsouderos that he would not sign the act. His refusal was the more serious because two days earlier E.A.M. had set up a Political Committee of Liberation with the purpose of convening a National Council of freely elected representatives. Within a short time matters were made worse owing to the outbreak of mutinies among the Greek military units<sup>1</sup> at Alexandria in favour of the Political Committee, and as a protest against M. Tsouderos' supposed subservience to the King. These mutinies were the more absurd because at the time when they broke out—April 3—M. Tsouderos had already resigned under pressure from his republican colleagues, and, on April 9, the leaders of E.A.M. sent messages accepting his invitation to another conference.

This conference took place in the Lebanon between May 17 and 21. Meanwhile M. Papandreou, a liberal republican from Greece, had formed a temporary government in Cairo. M. Papandreou obtained agreement at the conference to a general programme of unity under a single united government. He evaded the difficulty about the King's return by pointing out that the King had already promised to consult his Ministers about the date of his return, and that the Ministers agreed with the view of the Greek people that he should await the national decision.

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<sup>1</sup> These units were dangerously open to political agitation stirred up by E.A.M. The troops had little to do, and had been given little chance of active service. There were also disputes between the regular Greek forces from Greece and Greeks enlisted in Egypt.

Even so the Lebanon agreement did not bring any real unity. The King disliked M. Papandreou's interpretation of his letter about his return; the E.A.M. leaders went on with the organisation of their National Council and refused to ratify the settlement accepted by their own delegates. Finally, on August 17, they agreed to an arrangement under which they were allotted in the new government five ministerial offices, including the Ministry of Justice but not the Ministry of the Interior.

(iii)

*The Caserta Agreement: E.L.A.S. rebellion in Athens: American criticisms of British policy: visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Athens, December 25-28, 1944: appointment of Archbishop Damaskinos as Regent: the Varkiza Agreement (September, 1944-February, 1945).*

A German withdrawal from Greece was now only a matter of a few weeks or less. On August 21 M. Papandreou went to see Mr. Churchill in Rome. He summed up the situation in Greece by saying that the State was unarmed and that the arms were in the hands of organisations representing only a minority. His programme was to reverse the position, and for this purpose he needed British help. Mr. Churchill said that the British Government were considering whether they could send armed forces into Greece, but had come to no decision.<sup>1</sup> He asked the Greek Government to move to Italy. The Government reached Bari on August 31, and early in September moved, without the King, to Salerno. At the British Headquarters at Caserta they came to an agreement on September 26 with the leaders of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. and the National Bands in which all the guerrilla forces put themselves under the orders of General Scobie, Allied Commander-in-Chief designate in Greece.

British troops thus entered Athens on October 14, and were followed four days later by the Greek Government. The British forces were welcomed as a protection against E.L.A.S., but even in Athens armed communist groups circulated freely, and elsewhere in Greece the Government had little authority. If they were not to surrender the administrative machinery of the State to E.A.M., their first duty, as M. Papandreou had said to Mr. Churchill, was to replace the armed E.L.A.S. 'police' and other forces by their own troops and police. M. Papandreou proposed that all the guerrilla bands should be dissolved. The E.A.M. leaders could not accept this proposal

<sup>1</sup> This plan had been under consideration for a long time. Mr. Churchill informed Mr. Roosevelt of it on August 17, and received his approval on August 25 (see Churchill, VI, 99-100).

without abandoning the chance of taking power for themselves. At the beginning of December they started an armed revolt in Athens.

General Scobie had already ordered E.L.A.S. forces to leave Athens and the Piraeus, and had broadcast to the Greek people that he would resist any unconstitutional act of violence. On the night of December 4-5 Mr. Churchill telegraphed to him that reinforcements would be sent to him, and that he had full authority to put down disorder in Athens, and to neutralise or destroy E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. bands approaching the city.<sup>1</sup> For a week the military situation was serious, although the British forces held the most important points in central Athens<sup>2</sup>; with the arrival of reinforcements on and after December 13, the rebels began to realise that they had failed. They had expected to face the British authorities with a successful *coup d'état* but M. Papandreou's government had not resigned. The rebels had also hoped that public opinion in Great Britain and the United States, and, perhaps, action by the Soviet Government would have made it impossible for the British military authorities to use force against them. The Soviet Government, however, kept to the terms of the arrangement which they had made with the Prime Minister that Greece should be included within the sphere of British action. The Prime Minister was strongly criticised in the House of Commons, but on December 8 won a vote of confidence in his policy by a very large majority. Mr. Bevin defended this policy at a meeting of the Trades Union Congress on December 12.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Stettinius had issued a statement on December 5 sharply asserting American views on policy with regard to Italy<sup>4</sup> and adding,

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's telegram, see Churchill, VI, 252.

<sup>2</sup> The task of clearing the city was extremely difficult. Most of the rebels were in plain clothes, and managed to hide their arms when an area was being searched. There were not enough British troops to patrol the streets adequately at night, and to prevent the return of the rebels into areas previously cleared.

<sup>3</sup> Owing to their attempts to bring about an agreement between the Greek parties, the British authorities had done little or nothing to make known in Great Britain the totalitarian aims of the controlling minority in E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. or the terrorist methods which this minority had been using in Greece. Large sections of British opinion had come therefore to regard E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. as a moderate and patriotic body which had done very great service in the liberation of the country. This view gained credit owing to the King's obstinate refusal to take British advice; the incessant quarrels of the Greek politicians also damaged the standing of the government. The Foreign Office had long been complaining, in particular, of the idealist picture of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. in the 'build-up' of resistance movements in the European service of the B.B.C. The British press generally, including *The Times*, tended to accept the much advertised and inflated claims of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S., and to regard the Prime Minister's policy not as a defence of the processes of democracy against mob violence and communist dictatorship, but as an attempt to use British arms to thrust a reactionary king and government upon an unwilling people. There was a change of opinion at least in Great Britain after the rebellion as a result of information about the methods of E.L.A.S. from British prisoners, and from the letters of British troops in Greece.

<sup>4</sup> The coincidence of the crisis in Greece with an Anglo-American difference of opinion over a political crisis in Italy (see pp. 404-6) added to suspicion in the United States that British policy was determined by a desire to restore monarchies and establish spheres of influence.

in a kind of postscript, that the American policy of allowing liberated countries to work out their problems of government without influence from outside applied 'to an even more pronounced degree with regard to Governments of the United Nations in their liberated territories.'<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Roosevelt that he was 'much astonished at the acerbity' of Mr. Stettinius' statement, and that he would have to answer it in Parliament. Mr. Eden instructed Lord Halifax that the statement seemed to show 'calculated unfriendliness' towards Great Britain, and that he could speak as 'roughly' as he liked to Mr. Stettinius. Lord Halifax was in New York; he asked Mr. Wright, First Secretary at the British Embassy, to see Mr. Stettinius. Mr. Stettinius, after some plain speaking by Mr. Wright, said that he would send a friendly message at once to Mr. Eden, and make another statement quoting Mr. Churchill's words that the Greeks themselves had the right to choose their own government. On December 13 the President telegraphed<sup>2</sup> to the Prime Minister explaining that, owing to public opinion in the United States, he could not give much help, and suggesting that the King should approve the establishment of a Regency and announce that he would not go back to Greece unless called for by popular plebiscite.<sup>3</sup>

Although their *coup* in Athens had failed, the E.A.M. leaders thought that they could be defeated elsewhere only after a long and costly operation which the British military command would be unwilling to undertake, and that they could count on a large amount of public support in Great Britain and the United States. Hence the rebels did not at once accept the British terms that all armed E.L.A.S. troops must retire beyond the boundaries of Attica, and their Athenian supporters hand in their arms. The fighting therefore went on.<sup>4</sup> The British Government had to look for, and enforce a settlement, since M. Papandreou's Government had now lost all authority. General Scobie and Mr. Leeper had suggested, on December 10, as the most effective step towards pacification, that the King should appoint Archbishop Damaskinos as Regent. Mr. Macmillan, who had come to Athens with Field-Marshal Alexander, strongly supported this plan. Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Halifax reported on December 17 that Mr. Stettinius' statement had received the full backing of the President.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this telegram and of the Prime Minister's reply, see Churchill, VI, 261-3. The Prime Minister had also telegraphed to Mr. Hopkins on December 9 his view that we had a 'right to the President's support' for our policy. Churchill, VI, 259.

<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office commented that the President was asking the King to take a step which we had recommended a year ago, and which he (the President) had then advised the King to refuse.

<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile E.L.A.S. abducted large numbers of civilian hostages in the quarters of Athens under their control. They seized in all some 15-20,000 hostages, mainly women and elderly men of bourgeois families. Many of the hostages were murdered; others died of ill-treatment. The rebels' pretext for these seizures was that many of the hostages were former collaborators. The real purpose in taking them was to use them as a bargain in any negotiations.



Churchill at first approved of it, and proposed it to the King. The King refused, twice, to do more than appoint the Archbishop as Prime Minister. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden saw the King again on December 13; the King refused for the third time.

The King argued that the advice which he was receiving from Greece was not favourable to the plan, and that M. Papandreou did not support it. Mr. Eden therefore telegraphed to Mr. Macmillan asking why he and Mr. Leeper thought that a Regency would receive wide popular support. Their reply showed once again the complexity of Greek politics. Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper had put to M. Papandreou the importance of securing as head of the State in Greece some one who was outside the political parties and their controversies. Since the King was unacceptable, the Archbishop alone had the necessary qualifications. M. Papandreou had promised to telegraph to the King recommending the Archbishop's appointment as Regent. He had also promised to get a similar recommendation from M. Sophoulis<sup>1</sup> and other leading politicians. On December 15 Mr. Macmillan telegraphed that M. Papandreou was hesitating about fulfilling his promise, and seemed to be afraid that the Regent might not reappoint him as Prime Minister. He agreed, however, to recommend a Regency of three. M. Sophoulis had recommended a single Regent. Each of the two feared that a Regency might favour a policy of reconciliation rather than one of strengthening the Government against an opposition which could not be 'reconciled.' M. Papandreou in fact sent messages to the King on December 14 that M. Sophoulis was opposed to a Regency and that he (M. Papandreou) had accepted it only owing to pressure put on him that Mr. Churchill was insisting on it.

The King sent these messages to the Foreign Office on December 16. The War Cabinet had already decided not to force a Regency upon the King until they knew more definitely that the Ministers favoured the proposal. They asked Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper for more information, and agreed meanwhile to try to get the King's acceptance 'in principle' to a Regency. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw the King after the meeting of the War Cabinet. The King showed them another telegram of December 15 from M. Papandreou that Mr. Macmillan, Mr. Leeper, and General Scobie had insisted that the continuation of British political and military aid would be impossible without the acceptance of a Regency, since the Prime Minister's position was in danger.

Mr. Macmillan, on hearing from Mr. Eden an account of the King's statements, telegraphed that the Greek politicians had not

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<sup>1</sup> M. Sophoulis was leader of the Liberal (Venizelist) Party. He had previously been willing to work for the return of the King.

sent an accurate report. He and Mr. Leeper had argued for a Regency of the Archbishop on three grounds: (i) that it would be welcomed in Greece, and would be a guarantee against reprisals and counter-revolution; (ii) that it would be well received in the United States, and (iii) that it would relieve the political situation in Great Britain. The Prime Minister sent a somewhat angry reply that Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper could leave out of account any public criticism in Great Britain. The Prime Minister's view at this time was that we could not force the King to appoint the Archbishop as sole Regent against the advice of his Ministers, and that we were not certain whether the Archbishop was suited for the post. Mr. Churchill thought that the best plan would be a Regency of three.

The Foreign Office, on the other hand, did not regard this latter plan as a good solution;<sup>1</sup> the need was for one man acceptable to all parties, and not three, two of whom might be suspected by one side or the other. Mr. Eden explained the position to the War Cabinet on December 18. The War Cabinet, however, decided to postpone a decision for two or three days in order to give time for an improvement in the situation. On December 21 the Greek Ambassador informed the Foreign Office that M. Papandreou had telegraphed on the previous day to the King in favour of a Regency. Since it was still not clear whether the advice came from M. Papandreou alone, or from the whole Greek Government, the War Cabinet decided to enquire from the King what advice he had received. Mr. Howard of the Foreign Office therefore saw the King in the evening of December 21. The King's statement gave the impression that he considered the majority of the Government, including M. Papandreou, to be opposed to the Regency. Anyhow he remained unwilling to agree to it.

The Greek Ambassador, however, told the Foreign Office on the morning of December 22, that M. Papandreou's advice in his telegram had been definitely and unconditionally in favour of a single Regent. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden therefore made another attempt to persuade the King. The King remained stubbornly unwilling to make the appointment, and was again less than candid in his reference to M. Papandreou's change of view. On the other hand the King said that he regarded himself as bound by his pledge of July

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office also thought that the appointment of the Archbishop as Regent would be well received in the United States. (For a telegram from Mr. Hopkins on December 16 warning the Prime Minister of the possibility of another critical American statement, and for the Prime Minister's reply, see Churchill, VI, 263-4.) On December 17 the Prime Minister gave Mr. Roosevelt a further explanation of British policy. He said that he had 'felt it much' that the President was 'unable to give a word of explanation for our action,' but that he understood his difficulties (*ibid.*, 264-5). The Prime Minister also stated his doubts about the Regency proposed in telegrams of December 17, 19, and 22 to Field-Marshal Alexander (who had supported the proposal), and in a telegram of December 22 to Field-Marshal Smuts (*ibid.*, 267-70).

or August, 1943, not to return to Greece until the Greek people had expressed their will.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden decided on December 24 to go to Greece. They arrived at Athens on Christmas Day, and left on December 28. They held discussions with the Archbishop, and initiated a conference of Greek political leaders—including E.L.A.S. representatives—at which the proposal for a Regency was accepted.<sup>2</sup> The Archbishop made it clear to the Prime Minister that he intended to form a small administration with General Plastiras<sup>3</sup> as Prime Minister and including left-wing representatives other than Communists. He thought that, if this Government were established, and Attica cleared of the rebels, another conference might be called with a reasonable chance of success. He refused to accept the E.L.A.S. terms. These terms included 50 per cent of the seats in the government (with the Ministries of the Interior and of Justice),<sup>4</sup> drastic 'purges' in the army, city police, and civil service, and an immediate plebiscite on the constitutional question.<sup>5</sup> The Prime Minister promised to advise the King to appoint the Archbishop. If the King continued to refuse, the appointment would be made under a mandate of the three Great Powers, or by a declaration of the Greek Conference. Mr. Churchill said that the British Government would endorse the declaration. He also promised that British operations would continue until E.L.A.S. accepted General Scobie's terms, or Attica were cleared. We could not commit ourselves to operations after the clearing of Attica.

The King agreed on the night of December 29–30 to appoint the Archbishop as Regent, and to declare that he would not go back to Greece unless summoned by a free and fair expression of the national will.<sup>6</sup> The formal announcement of the appointment was made on December 30, and on January 3, 1945, the Regent asked General

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<sup>1</sup> As Sir A. Cadogan noted on the report of the conversation, the King had never given any such pledge. Mr. Eden had tried to persuade him to do so, but 'the pitch was queered by the President and Field-Marshal Smuts, as the King himself must well remember.' See above, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> For the Prime Minister's account of his visit, see Churchill, VI, 270–9.

<sup>3</sup> General Plastiras had been one of the two leaders who had set up a revolutionary government in 1922 and had forced the abdication of King Constantine.

<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden gave an account of the situation to the War Cabinet on December 29. The War Cabinet noted that the Lublin Poles had asked for similar 'key' offices. The Prime Minister told the War Cabinet that he had been favourably impressed by the Archbishop.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. a plebiscite while E.L.A.S. were still in control of large areas of the country.

<sup>6</sup> The King, however, caused further trouble by telegraphing to M. Papandreu an inaccurate version of his conversation with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden. Mr. Eden had an unsatisfactory interview with the King on the subject, and did not accept the King's version of what he had done. The King was told that he must not send messages to anyone except the Regent.

Plastiras to take office as Prime Minister. Six days later, a delegation from the rebels, who had now been driven beyond the borders of Attica, asked for terms. General Scobie told them that E.L.A.S. forces must be withdrawn from the northern Peloponnese, from an area around Salonika, and from the territory between Attica and a line running north and west of Volos, Lamia, and Itea, and that they must surrender all prisoners of war and hostages.<sup>1</sup> E.L.A.S. accepted the demands about withdrawal, and agreed to release British prisoners. They refused to give up the hostages. General Scobie misinterpreted a telegram that he should not ask for too much to refer not to the territorial demands but to the return of the hostages. Since the rebels held out on this question he decided not to insist upon it.

The War Cabinet agreed with the Prime Minister that we could not abandon the hostages, and should make a statement that the taking of hostages was a barbarous custom condemned by international law and that we could not regard the truce as lasting until they had been released. Representatives of the Greek Government and E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. met at Varkiza, near Athens, on February 3; after ten days of negotiation they agreed upon the immediate return of the hostages, and an amnesty for political crimes committed since the outbreak of the rebellion. E.L.A.S. and its armed 'police' were to be demobilised, and to surrender their arms.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 359, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> The amnesty did not apply to 'common law' crimes against life and property not necessary for the attainment of a political end. Some of the worst offenders in the E.L.A.S. forces escaped into the hills. The chief criminal—Ares Velouhiotis, one of the E.L.A.S. military leaders—was killed in June, 1945, during a fight with Government forces in the Pindus mountains.

## CHAPTER XIX

### British policy towards Spain from the summer of 1941 to the Potsdam Conference

#### (i)

*British and American policy towards Spain from the summer of 1941 to the end of 1943: Spanish attitude at the time of the North African landings: General Franco's wish for a 'compromise' peace.*

THERE was little change—and indeed little reason for change—in British policy towards Spain or in the Spanish attitude towards Great Britain during the latter half of 1941 and the whole of the year 1942. In a speech of July 18, 1941, commemorating the fifth anniversary of his insurrection, General Franco committed himself to a statement that the Allies had lost the war. Six months later he was less certain; meanwhile he had continued to keep Spain out of the war, or rather, from his point of view, to keep the war out of Spain. He sent the so-called Spanish Blue division to the Russian front, but on the military and economic side kept in all important matters to his undertakings with the British Government. In November, 1941, the Foreign Office had no evidence that he was breaking to any serious extent his war trade assurances or that he was allowing the use of Spanish territory for the refuelling of German submarines; after a British complaint that certain German ships at Teneriffe were being used for this purpose, the Spanish Government moved the ships to the inner harbour. The British Government objected in the spring of 1942 to the installation—by German specialists—of apparatus for night observation on both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar. The Spanish Government answered that the installations were necessary for Spanish coastal defence, and that British or Allied shipping would not be attacked by Axis shipping or aircraft as a result of information obtained through these installations. In spite of German boasts (which may or may not have been true) that they were getting useful information, the British Government accepted the Spanish assurances.

The Spanish Government—as Mr. Churchill always remembered—did not hinder Allied naval and air concentrations at Gibraltar before the Allied landings in North Africa, though they could have objected, for example, to the use of Spanish territorial waters adjacent to Gibraltar, and of the airfield on neutral ground. The dismissal of Senor Suñer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on September 3,

1942, was due to internal reasons, but removed from power at a critical time one of the worst enemies of the Allies in Spain. General Jordana, the new Foreign Minister, told Sir S. Hoare on October 19 that Spain would continue to keep out of the war.

A week earlier the Duke of Alba, Spanish Ambassador in London, had given the Foreign Office a note on Spanish policy. This note explained that, while Spain was in agreement with Germany on the need to fight communism, she did not share 'ideas, doctrines, or aspirations which were quite alien to her.' The Spanish view was that the prolongation of the war was favourable to 'revolutionary tendencies', and that there were no fundamental differences which could not be 'arranged' between the 'two adversaries.' Spain did not intend at the moment to intervene, and wanted the belligerents to know that there were countries outside the war which might be able to find a formula acceptable to both sides. The Foreign Office did not regard this note as a German peace approach. On the other hand they thought it necessary to tell the Spanish Government that we could not accept their view, and that there was 'no prospect whatever' of the United Nations, and, in particular, Great Britain encouraging an attempt to bring about a 'compromise' peace.

The British and United States Ambassadors informed the Spanish Government on the day of the North African landings that the Allies would respect Spanish territory and interests. The American message did not mention British participation in the landings. The British message—which was longer—said (i) that the operations would not affect the existing *modus vivendi* at Tangier or the Anglo-Spanish trade agreement, (ii) that the British Government were in full sympathy with the Spanish intention to keep out of the war, and wished Spain 'every opportunity to recover from the devastation of the civil war and to take her place in the reconstruction of the Europe of the future.'<sup>1</sup>

After the success of the Allied landings, General Franco became more insistent upon the desirability of 'a compromise peace'. In spite of the British reply to the Spanish note of October 12, 1942, he sent a message in January, 1943, to the Prime Minister that the longer the war lasted, the greater would be the predominance of the U.S.S.R. and the United States over their British ally. General Franco urged the British Government to come to terms with 'influential sections' in Germany who would save Europe from communism and Russian control. He said that he had detailed reports of conversations in which Mr. Churchill had promised Stalin a predominant influence over all Europe east of the Rhine.

Sir S. Hoare, who was shewn a copy of the message in Madrid, told

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister spoke in similar terms in a speech at the Mansion House on November 10, 1942.



the Spanish Foreign Office that General Franco had entirely misunderstood the British attitude towards the war, and was completely misinformed about the conversations in Moscow. The Foreign Office therefore did not regard any further reply as necessary. In mid-April, 1943, Mr. Churchill, in a conversation with the Duke of Alba about an early peace, said that we should insist upon unconditional surrender, and that 'anyone who thought otherwise was wasting his time.' General Franco, however, went on making public references to the possibility of an early peace, and the Spanish press, which had made no protests about the bombing of civilians by Germany, now began to talk about limitations on air attacks.<sup>1</sup>

After the fall of Mussolini the Foreign Office considered that the Allies might well warn General Franco that their policy towards Spain after the war would be influenced by the behaviour of the Spanish Government while the war lasted. The United States Government believed it possible to take a sterner line, with a threat of economic sanctions. There had been indeed since the entry of the United States into the war a certain divergence between the British and American views upon the amount of pressure which it was expedient to put upon General Franco. The Foreign Office thought that the Americans underestimated Spanish obstinacy and the risk of uniting opinion in favour of General Franco. The Americans were less interested than we were in getting important supplies from Spain, and did not realise that we had been more successful than the Germans in economic negotiations partly because we had tried to meet Spanish needs, whereas the Germans had bullied the Spanish Government, charged them exorbitant prices, and taken little trouble to give them the goods they required.

The Foreign Office agreed, however, that we might make certain demands including the discontinuance of supplies of raw material—especially wolfram—to Germany, and the withdrawal of the Blue Division. The Americans put their case at the first Quebec Conference for more drastic demands. Meanwhile Sir S. Hoare had spoken plainly to General Franco and General Jordana on August 21. He said that the three main obstacles to good Anglo-Spanish relations were the Falange, the Blue Division, and the Spanish policy of non-belligerency. General Franco argued that the attitude of the Falange towards us went back to our attitude in the civil war. He had then

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Alba told Mr. Eden in June, 1943, that General Franco's talk about peace was not German-inspired, and had caused almost as much resentment in Germany as in Great Britain. As late as March 24, 1944, General Jordana gave Sir S. Hoare a message for the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden from General Franco assuring them of the wish of the Spanish Government to maintain friendly relations with Great Britain. General Jordana said that he and General Franco were greatly alarmed at the danger to European civilisation from a prolonged war. They looked particularly to Great Britain as the guardian of European civilisation, and prayed that the war might soon end. Sir S. Hoare made the usual answer that peace could come only after a decisive Allied victory.

failed to get British help, and had been driven, against his will, to accept help from Germany and Italy. Spain had now repaid its debt to the Axis, and the civil authorities and party officials had been given the strictest orders not to discriminate against us. General Franco again distinguished between the Spanish attitude to Russia and their genuine neutrality towards the Western Allies. He said that the sending of the Blue Division to fight on the Russian front was merely a symbolic gesture, and that he would withdraw it at once if there were any risk of it coming into conflict with British or American forces.

Mr. Eden did not regard this reply as satisfactory. For a time, however, there was some improvement in the Spanish attitude. General Franco promised the withdrawal of the Blue Division and took more effective measures to secure the internment of the crews of U-boats which had taken refuge in Spanish harbours. He agreed to keep exports of wolfram to Germany at a low level, and to modify the sterling-peseta rate in our favour. The tone of the Spanish press was better, and the Spanish Government accepted without any counter-move the Allied agreement with Portugal over the Azores.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless the British Government still had serious grievances<sup>2</sup> and a long list of minor complaints against the Spanish Government.

(ii)

*The question of Spanish exports of wolfram to Germany in 1944: differences between British and American views: agreement on a compromise: Spanish acceptance of other British demands.*

General Franco shewed no sign of a lack of confidence in his own future after the change in the military situation during 1943. The collapse of Italian fascism had not weakened his domestic position; the British Government at least did not want a recurrence of civil war in Spain, and would do nothing to provoke it. On the other hand both the British and the United States Governments continued to think that General Franco was taking their toleration of him too much for granted, and that they should shake his complacency and make him stop activities in Spain which were still favourable to the Germans. The United States Ambassador was instructed to warn him early in the New Year that owing to the increased scale of

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chapter XX, section (ii).

<sup>2</sup> e.g. there were no effective measures against German acts of sabotage, e.g. of cargoes for Great Britain, or against German espionage activities. A Spanish air squadron was still on the eastern front, and was receiving reinforcements.

military operations there might be difficulty in supplying Spain with oil; oil shipments were in fact suspended in January. Sir S. Hoare left with General Jordana a list of outstanding questions about which the British Government had reason to complain. General Franco at first was unwilling to see Sir S. Hoare; Sir S. Hoare then told General Jordana that he was asking for an interview not as a favour but in order to point out the seriousness of the situation from the Spanish point of view. General Franco received Sir S. Hoare on January 28, 1944. He gave the usual assurances, and made the usual excuses.<sup>1</sup> Sir S. Hoare, however, understood from General Jordana that all the British demands would have been accepted. Unfortunately a leakage in Washington—followed by an official announcement—about the stoppage of oil supplies offended the Spanish Government.

The United States Government now went beyond mere warning, and demanded the cessation of all supplies of wolfram to Germany under threat of continuing the suspension of oil supplies to Spain. The Foreign Office thought the Spanish Government would be under very heavy German pressure not to accept a demand of this kind, and that they might refuse it. We should then have lost the chance of getting rid of enemy agents in Spain and Tangier. On the other hand, if the Americans persisted in their demand we should have to support them; otherwise the Spanish Government would conclude that the Allies were divided.

The Prime Minister told the President on February 13 that we would support the American action, but that we did not think it desirable to concentrate altogether on the export of wolfram and neglect the question of German agents in Spain. The President replied that, if we were firm, we could obtain a complete embargo; the Germans were known to be very short of wolfram and supplies obtained at this time could be 'directly translated into terms of British and American casualties.' The Foreign Office suggested that in reply we should point out that the activities of German spies and saboteurs on Spanish territory could also be translated into terms of British and American lives.

Meanwhile, however, Sir S. Hoare reported an offer to him from General Jordana on February 17—(i) to close the German consulate at Tangier and expel all German agents from Tangier and Spain, (ii) to dissolve and repatriate all Spanish units on the Russian front, (iii) to release all Italian merchant ships, (iv) to give every facility for ensuring a drastic limit of wolfram exports. Sir S. Hoare had proposed that, while the Spanish Government would maintain its sovereign right to export any commodity, it would in fact cut down wolfram exports to a point which would prevent Germany from

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden, who had complained to the Duke of Alba on January 24, also received these assurances.

getting any during the next six months.<sup>1</sup> General Jordana agreed to consider the suggestion, but asked the Allied Governments to remove the threat of oil sanctions. The Foreign Office thought it most desirable to accept a settlement on these lines; the State Department—without consulting the British Government—instructed the United States Ambassador in Madrid to insist upon a complete embargo before the resumption of oil supplies.

Lord Halifax complained to Mr. Stettinius of this unilateral action, and the Prime Minister, in a message to the President, pointed out that we had every hope of maintaining the position about wolfram after the six months had passed. On February 28 the United States Ambassador told General Jordana that the United States Government would accept an earlier Spanish offer to reduce the total export to Germany to one-tenth of the 1943 figure, with the additional condition that there would be no export during the next six months. General Jordana now said that, although he could have agreed to this proposal a few days earlier, there had been a second 'leak,' in other words an almost complete disclosure of the negotiations in the *New York Times*, with the result that he had received a formidable German protest, and had to consult the Spanish Council of Ministers. Hence the negotiations dragged on through March. On March 27 Mr. Eden told the War Cabinet that the figure in dispute had been narrowed down to the export of some 150 tons of wolfram before June 30. The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President on March 30 again asking him to accept a compromise. Mr. Eden also instructed Lord Halifax to tell the State Department that proposals by Mr. Hull for a long-term economic agreement with Spain were 'unrealistic' since the negotiations would be a matter of months.

On April 11 General Jordana said the Spanish Government would agree to accept a limitation of 60 tons from that date until the end of June. The Foreign Office again thought that this offer should be accepted. The Germans would get far less than the 500–600 tons of wolfram in store on the frontier,<sup>2</sup> and the Spanish Government would have complied with all our other demands. It became clear, however, that the real objections on the American side to any compromise were due to domestic considerations in the United States. Mr. Acheson told Lord Halifax on April 11 that the Administration—in view of the Presidential election in November—could not risk public criticism by sending oil to Spain while Spain was exporting wolfram to Germany. Mr. Hull had made a speech on April 9 in which he had said that

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<sup>1</sup> In spite of their annoyance at the announcement of the stoppage of oil supplies the Spanish Government at the beginning of February put a temporary ban on wolfram exports.

<sup>2</sup> These stocks were near the Pyrenees. The Foreign Office had pointed out earlier that the Spanish Government might hand them over to the Germans in return for oil.

the time for giving way to neutrals had passed. This speech had had a good effect, and Mr. Hull would not go back on it.

Mr. Hull himself suggested to Lord Halifax on April 17 that the British Government should provide the oil shipments to Spain, and that, if we did so on the basis of the proposed compromise about wolfram, the State Department would go as far as they could in supporting us. The proposal meant shifting to the British Government the responsibility for an unpopular decision; the Prime Minister replied to Lord Halifax that he was 'ready to take full responsibility for doing a sensible thing, whether it is popular or unpopular. . . . We have not got an election on here, and anyhow we can take whatever is coming to us.' The Foreign Office were more doubtful. They did not expect much support from Mr. Hull, and thought that once again we should be accused of 'appeasing' General Franco while the Americans appeared to be holding to their principles. On the other hand we should not get our other political and economic demands from Spain unless we accepted Mr. Hull's suggestion. The War Cabinet took a similar view. There was a further delay because the President wanted another attempt to be made to get a complete embargo, but on April 25 he authorised Mr. Hull to accept what he called Lord Halifax's proposal. On the following night, however, Lord Halifax reported that Mr. Hull had changed his mind again, and that the United States Ambassador had been told to put to General Franco the request for an immediate embargo. If the request were refused, the Ambassador could agree to the compromise plan. The demand—as the Ambassador had expected—was refused; the Ambassador then proposed the compromise plan of 20 tons a month for May and June. General Franco accepted the proposal, and Mr. Eden announced on May 2 a general settlement of the demands made by the British Government.

(iii)

*The Prime Minister's speech of May 24, 1944: the question of a warning to General Franco: declaration of the Potsdam Conference regarding Spanish membership of the United Nations.*

On May 24, 1944, the Prime Minister referred in the House of Commons to Spain. He said that the Spanish Government had made amends in the period before the Allied landings in North Africa for any assistance which they had previously given to Germany. He hoped that Spain would be a strong influence for peace in the Mediterranean after the war, and said that he regarded Spanish internal

problems as matters for the Spaniards themselves.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister's intention—as he explained in a message of June 4 to the President—was to distinguish between General Franco and the Spanish people, but the speech added to General Franco's complacency and discouraged the Spanish opposition.

Lord Templewood<sup>2</sup> suggested, in October, 1944, that the Allies should warn General Franco that their relations with him after the war would be seriously affected if he did not improve his Government. The Foreign Office doubted whether there was much we could do without abandoning our general policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries unless they threatened aggression. At this time, when the military situation had begun to allow more freedom of choice in the political sphere, pre-war divisions of opinion about Spain tended to reassert themselves in the War Cabinet, but, whatever their views of General Franco's government in relation either to the Spanish régime which it had replaced or to other authoritarian governments such as those of the U.S.S.R. and Portugal, Ministers were agreed that there was little chance of establishing at once a democratic government in Spain, and that we could do little to change the situation. Mr. Eden proposed to the Prime Minister that Lord Halifax should be instructed to ask the State Department whether they would join with us in a warning to General Franco that there could be no question of allowing Falangist Spain a seat at the Peace Conference, and that her admission to the United Nations was unlikely. If this warning did not shake General Franco, we might go as far as the suspension of oil shipments to Spain.

The Prime Minister replied in an unusually long minute that the question should be considered by the War Cabinet. He did not think that any neutrals should be brought into the Conference until well after the proceedings had begun, but he would not interfere in the internal government of a country which had done us much more good than harm in the war. Mr. Churchill did not believe that General Franco's position would be weakened by our warnings. On the other hand we were already accused of handing over the Balkans and Central Europe to Russia, and need not make needless trouble for ourselves by allowing a communist control of Spain.

Mr. Eden replied on November 17 that he did not want to start revolution in Spain, but that unless General Franco could be persuaded to look for wider popular support for his government, a recurrence of civil war was certain. Meanwhile the Spanish Amba-

<sup>1</sup> Parl. Deb. 5th Ser., H. of C., vol. 400, cols. 768-72. The Prime Minister pointed out later to Mr. Eden that he, and the Foreign Office, had seen the draft of this speech, and had not commented on the reference to Spain.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Hoare was elevated to the peerage as Viscount Templewood on July 3, 1944. He gave up his post as Ambassador to Spain in the late autumn of 1944.



sador had brought to the Foreign Office a letter from General Franco to the British Government.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden thought that the Prime Minister might send a letter of warning in reply. The Prime Minister was willing to send a reply though he told Mr. Eden that he 'had not the slightest intention of starting an anti-Franco crusade any more than [he wished] to walk down the street with him arm in arm.' The Prime Minister's letter ended with a plain statement that the British Government would not consider 'any grouping of Powers in Western Europe or elsewhere on a basis of hostility towards or of the alleged necessity of defence against our Russian Allies.'<sup>2</sup>

General Franco was not, in fact, shaken by the Prime Minister's letter. He still took the line that Great Britain would need Spanish help against Russia after the war, and that only some further 'clarification' was necessary to enable the British and Spanish Governments to reach agreement. General Franco's attitude, however, had now ceased to be of any immediate importance to the Allies. Neither the British nor the United States Government had any reason to change their policy of 'cold reserve' towards the Spanish régime. At the same time the Foreign Office considered it 'at least doubtful' whether British interests would gain by the substitution of a communist régime for the Franco régime, and certain that our interests would be harmed by another civil war.

The Soviet delegation at the Potsdam Conference proposed that the three Powers should recommend to the United Nations that they should break off relations with General Franco's Government, and support the 'democratic forces' in Spain and thus enable the Spanish people 'to establish such a régime as will respond to their will.' This proposal was discussed at a plenary meeting on July 19. The Prime Minister said that the British Government disliked the Spanish régime, but that he was afraid that the Russian proposal might have the effect of rallying round General Franco those elements who were now deserting him. The Prime Minister also thought that we ought not to interfere in the affairs of a country which had neither fought against us nor been liberated by us. Stalin suggested that the proposal should be referred to the Foreign Secretaries. Mr. Truman was willing to accept this suggestion. Mr. Churchill said that the matter

<sup>1</sup> The letter was formally addressed to the Ambassador. When the Ambassador said that he wanted to deliver it, Sir A. Cadogan told him that he hoped that the letter did not contain any 'injudicious remarks,' since General Franco had recently been making some strange claims, e.g. that Spain should be represented at the Peace Conference. The letter mainly was a complaint about British policy and propaganda in Spain.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister sent copies of his letter to President Roosevelt and to Stalin. There was some leakage in Washington about this exchange of letters. The Prime Minister then wanted to publish the correspondence, or at least his own letter, but the Foreign Office thought that Spanish public opinion would resent any unilateral publication.

was one of principle—non-intervention in the domestic affairs of another country—and should be decided by the plenary conference.

The British Delegation considered after this discussion that, while they could not accept the Russian proposal, they might well agree to some form of resolution disapproving of General Franco and his régime. They proposed a form of words stating that, as long as the present régime in Spain remained unaltered, the three Powers would be unable to support a Spanish application for membership of the World Organisation. Mr. Byrnes introduced on July 20 a statement on these lines in connection with the President's proposal for the admission of Italy. From this point, the question of Spain became overshadowed by the Russian demand that any statement should also refer to the 'satellite' States, but Mr. Byrnes' proposal was carried over into the final paragraph of a general declaration about admission to the United Nations Organisation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 551 and 555.

## CHAPTER XX

### British relations with Portugal during the war

#### (i)

*The neutrality of Portugal: Anglo-Portuguese discussions on defence: possibility of a German seizure of the Portuguese Atlantic islands: the question of the defence of Timor: Portuguese protests against Allied landings in Timor: Japanese occupation of Timor.*

At the beginning of the war Portuguese opinion was generally favourable to Great Britain. This attitude—official and non-official—was not due only to the long traditions of common interest represented by the Anglo-Portuguese alliance.<sup>1</sup> The Russo-German pact, and the invasion of Catholic Poland had nullified the efforts of German propaganda to convince the Portuguese people that they should look to Germany for protection against communist interference. Dr. Salazar, in agreement with the British Government, declared the neutrality of Portugal. Portuguese neutrality, strictly enforced to prevent the use of ports and territorial waters by German submarines, was of greater advantage to the Allies than to the Germans, whereas Portuguese belligerency might have brought Spain—and Italy—into the war on the other side.

The collapse of France and the pro-Axis attitude of Spain caused the Portuguese Government very serious anxiety. The obvious and immediate danger was lessened when on July 29, 1940, Dr. Salazar signed a protocol with General Franco providing for close Spanish-Portuguese collaboration in the event of an emergency. This protocol was annexed to the Spanish-Portuguese treaty of friendship and non-aggression of 1939, and was described as having a similar validity, 'whatever the treaty connexions or engagements of either of the contracting Powers with third parties.' The protocol thus recognised indirectly the obligations of Portugal under her alliance with Great Britain.

From the British point of view the question of the Spanish and Portuguese islands in the Atlantic was hardly of less strategic importance than the mainland. There was a danger that the Germans might be able to send a force to the Cape Verde islands and the Azores from French or even Norwegian ports. The Prime Minister was inclined to take preventive action at once by seizing the Portuguese

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<sup>1</sup> This formal alliance dated back to 1380.

islands; the Foreign Office was most anxious that no British action should be taken until it was clear beyond doubt that the Germans were trying to occupy the islands. Hence nothing was done except to have a force ready for an immediate landing. President Roosevelt was told of these plans in September, 1940.

At the end of the year 1940 the situation seemed less critical. The Germans had failed to invade Great Britain; Italy had met with military disaster in Greece and North Africa. General Franco had shown that, while he did not want a German defeat, he intended to keep Spain out of the war as long as he was able to do so. In December, 1940, Dr. Salazar asked the British Government for secret discussions on the possibility of British assistance in the event of a German invasion of Portugal. A Portuguese military mission came to London in February, 1941, for these discussions. The British authorities could not make any definite commitments; they offered to provide material, and to arrange for sending military assistance on the hypothesis that there was some Spanish opposition to the Germans, and that a Portuguese appeal for aid was received as soon as the Germans crossed the Pyrenees. The Portuguese, however, wished to be left free to ask for help only in the event of an actual attack on Portugal (when, in fact, there would have been no time to send troops).

In these circumstances the British Government advised the Portuguese that their best plan, in the event of an attack, would be to make only a token resistance on the mainland and to move their Government to the Azores. Dr. Salazar accepted this advice, and began at once to reinforce the islands. The British Government informed the United States Government confidentially, as early as May, 1941, of the arrangements, and the United States authorities agreed that the discussions with Portugal should be left primarily to Great Britain in view of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance.

The context of this correspondence with the United States was an American decision to occupy the Azores if the Germans made a move to seize them. The United States Government also asked the President of Brazil whether Brazil would join in this temporary and preventive occupation. The British Government was most careful to avoid disturbing Portuguese opinion by any suggestion in the press of an occupation of the islands. They could not secure a similar reticence in the United States. President Roosevelt himself, in one of his most important broadcasts (May 27, 1941), had mentioned the danger to the United States if the islands were occupied or controlled by Germany. The Portuguese Government were afraid that this reference might lead Germany to seize the islands in anticipation of an American or British preventive occupation. They protested to the

United States Government that they intended to maintain and defend their neutrality. After a reference by Senator Pepper, in a speech to the United States Senate, to a possible American occupation of the islands, the Portuguese Government issued a statement that they had received an explicit declaration from the United States Government that Senator Pepper's views had no relation to United States policy, and that this policy was one of strict respect for Portuguese sovereignty.

Dr. Salazar's sensitiveness to any infringement of Portuguese sovereignty resulted soon after the extension of the war to the Far East in a serious crisis over Timor.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of November, 1941, the Portuguese Ambassador in London told Mr. Eden that Portugal would resist a Japanese attack on Timor and might ask for British help under the terms of the alliance. The arrangements for assistance, which included consultation with the Australian and Netherlands Governments, had not been concluded before the outbreak of war with Japan. On December 11, with Australian and Dutch approval, the Portuguese Government was informed that in the event of an attack on Timor, Australian and Dutch forces would at once come to the help of the Portuguese; the British Government therefore hoped that the Governor of Portuguese Timor would be instructed to 'invite such assistance if the occasion arose or to acquiesce in its being furnished in the event of there being no time for an invitation to be addressed to His Majesty's Government or the local authorities.' The Portuguese Government accepted this offer on December 12.

Four days later the Secretary of State instructed Sir R. Campbell, British Ambassador to Portugal, to inform the Portuguese Government that the Dutch authorities had reported the presence of Japanese submarines near Timor, and expected a Japanese attack. They had therefore arranged with the Australian Government that Dutch and Australian officers should see the Governor, and that, in anticipation of an invitation from him to land, some 350 Dutch and Australian troops should arrive two hours after the interview. The Foreign Office, on hearing of the plan, thought that the time-table did not allow sufficient interval for consultation, but it was too late to make any change.

Dr. Salazar's reaction was sharp and violent. He refused to allow the Governor to agree to assistance except in the event of an attack. He argued that an earlier admission of Allied troops would mean the abandonment of Portuguese neutrality, and would be followed by a Japanese seizure of Macao. Meanwhile the troops had landed. The

<sup>1</sup> The island of Timor—divided between Dutch and Portuguese sovereignty—was of obvious strategic importance in relation to the Netherlands East Indies and Australia. The Portuguese garrison was very small, and the Japanese already had facilities for the use of an aerodrome for civil aviation.

Portuguese Government then protested against the landing as a violation of their sovereignty.

The situation now showed the difficulties which follow the loss of military initiative in war. Timor was of the greatest importance to Australia at a time when she might be threatened with invasion and isolation. The small body of troops sent to the island could not ensure its defence, but might fight a delaying action and could be reinforced. On the other hand, a break with Portugal, which was not unlikely in view of Dr. Salazar's 'absolute' and uncompromising temperament, might lose us the use of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands in the event of a German occupation of the Portuguese mainland. We might even find that facilities in the islands were being given to the Axis Powers. We should lose, and Germany would obtain, the whole of the Portuguese supply of wolfram. Furthermore a break with Portugal might well have as its consequence a break with Spain.

The Foreign Office thought it unwise to argue with the Portuguese Government that they had suddenly changed their minds. They seemed in fact to have interpreted our offer as applying only after an attack had taken place, and, anyhow, considered it safer from their own point of view to maintain that the landing of Allied troops was contrary to their wishes. Mr. Eden therefore recommended that we should state our regret for the action which we had been compelled to take owing to the inability of the Portuguese in Timor to defend their territory, and say that our forces would be withdrawn on the arrival of Portuguese reinforcements. The Portuguese Government agreed to settle the matter on these terms. The Japanese, however, attacked Dutch and Portuguese Timor on February 19-20, 1942, before the reinforcements arrived. As the Foreign Office had anticipated, the small Allied force had to retreat inland. The Japanese Minister in Lisbon informed the Portuguese Government that the landings were necessary to expel the foreign troops in Timor. The Portuguese protests had no effect, but the Allied force managed to hold out in the hills. Early in June, 1942, the Portuguese authorities transmitted a suggestion that, if the force surrendered, the Japanese might agree to withdraw from the island. The Australian Government thought that this proposal was merely a Japanese move to secure a surrender, and that the Allied troops were well organised and supplied, and could hold out. The Allied force in fact continued a guerrilla warfare against the Japanese, though they would have been withdrawn if the Japanese had begun to attack them in strength. On the other hand the Allies were not yet able to send an expedition for the recovery of the island.

In June, 1943, Dr. Salazar said, in the context of the Allied demands for facilities in the Azores, that Portugal intended to maintain her neutrality, except, possibly, in the Far East, where he hoped



that Portuguese troops might take part in the recapture of Timor. The Foreign Office regarded their participation as desirable; the British Chiefs of Staff did not welcome it, and the United States Chiefs of Staff were definitely against it. The Foreign Office thought this military view extraordinary, since the entry of Portugal into the war would enable us to establish bases in Portuguese East Africa and possibly in the Cape Verde Islands. The Americans later changed their minds, and a general agreement was reached in staff conversations during September, 1944, but no detailed arrangements for Portuguese cooperation had been made by the end of January, 1945. The Foreign Office considered that we ought to honour our promise, and settle these arrangements. Even so the Combined Chiefs of Staff did not give their views until July, 1945; they then said that an expedition to Timor would have to await the end of operations against 'higher priority Japanese-held objectives.' They promised, however, to give the Portuguese ample time to arrange the despatch and preparation of their force.

## (ii)

*The grant of facilities in the Azores to Great Britain under the terms of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance: American demand for additional facilities.*

The strategic importance of Timor was far less than that of the Atlantic Islands, but there was no chance of persuading Dr. Salazar to allow the Allies into the islands as long as the Germans might retaliate by an invasion of Portugal. In the early part of 1943 such an invasion no longer seemed probable. Meanwhile, in view of the transport of American troops as well as supplies to Europe, the Admiralty and the United States Navy Department became more anxious to secure the islands as bases. On February 12, 1943, the Foreign Office were informed by the British Embassy at Rio de Janeiro that President Roosevelt had suggested to the President of Brazil that Brazil should take over the defence of the islands. Mr. Eden's view of this proposal was that Dr. Salazar would reject it, and that, if it were necessary for the Allies to use the islands, it would be more honest as well as more expedient for the British Government to invoke the Anglo-Portuguese alliance and ask for Dr. Salazar's help in shortening the war.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office thought that, since President Roosevelt had previously agreed to leave Allied relations with Portugal principally in British hands, he must have discussed the question of the islands with Mr. Churchill at Casablanca before making this suggestion to the President of Brazil. The Prime Minister however, in a minute to Mr. Eden, wrote that there had been no discussion of the matter at Casablanca.

The Brazilian Government made no approach, at all events formally, to the Portuguese, and the United States Government agreed to take no further action until they had discussed the question with the British Government. For some time, and until the North African campaign was finished, the proposal was put aside. On May 10, 1943, while on his way to Washington, the Prime Minister telegraphed that the Chiefs of Staff had asked his approval to discuss with the Americans a combined approach to the Portuguese with regard to the Azores. The Prime Minister was inclined to agree, and to go as far as telling the Portuguese that if they refused our request, we would take over the islands by force.

The Foreign Office held most strongly that the seizure of the islands would be unjustified morally, and would have bad political and economic consequences. The Defence Committee took a similar view, and pointed out that anyhow owing to the shortage of landing craft and trained troops an expedition could not be undertaken before the end of August. These views were put in a telegram to the Prime Minister. He replied on May 21 that Admiral Pound and Admiral King were greatly in favour of an occupation which might save a million tons of shipping and several thousand lives. Mr. Churchill could see no 'moral substance' in the legalistic point about overriding Portuguese neutrality. The fate of all the small nations depended on our victory; we should not hesitate to take steps which would shorten the war, and save lives. The Prime Minister mentioned the Allied action in Greece in 1916.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden and Mr. Attlee replied on May 21 on behalf of the War Cabinet asking that a decision should be postponed until the Prime Minister's return. Mr. Churchill replied somewhat angrily that postponement would 'paralyse action.' The War Cabinet, however, maintained their opinion that as the operation could not be carried out for two months at the earliest we should begin with a diplomatic approach on the basis of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance. The Prime Minister finally agreed to this approach, though he doubted whether we should be able to avoid a threat of force.

With the President's agreement, the approach to Dr. Salazar was made on June 18, 1943, by the British Ambassador at Lisbon.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Salazar evidently had not expected it at this time but did not answer

<sup>1</sup> This action taken against pro-German moves by the Greek King in contradiction to the wishes of the majority of his Government and people was not in fact a parallel.

<sup>2</sup> The British Government asked for (a) facilities at São Miguel and Terceira for operating reconnaissance aircraft, (b) unrestricted fuelling facilities for naval escorts at São Miguel or Fayal. They promised to withdraw after the war, and to leave the installations which they had introduced. They offered assurances regarding the future of the Portuguese Empire and the protection of Portuguese shipping. The Prime Minister telegraphed to President Roosevelt that he would like to associate the United States with our requests and assurances especially with regard to the Portuguese colonies. The President agreed with the proposals but did not refer in his reply to an American guarantee.

with a refusal. On June 24 he sent a formal reply accepting the requests in principle and under the terms of the alliance. He wanted to provide the facilities without bringing Portugal into the war, and was also unwilling to allow any troops other than British into the islands. Mr. Eden thought it better to say as little as possible about this latter point since we should be able to extend the facilities without much difficulty, e.g. to cover the operation of American aircraft from the islands. Dr. Salazar had already agreed that the 'mixed' arrangements of convoys would make it inconvenient to restrict all facilities to British ships; he was therefore willing to allow refuelling facilities to American warships and merchant ships. The Foreign Office also regarded it as satisfactory that Dr. Salazar did not want to come into the war, since we could not offer him much help on land. The Prime Minister proposed to set a time-limit to the detailed discussions, but Mr. Eden explained that Dr. Salazar already knew that we expected an early conclusion, and that the mention of a time-limit would look like an ultimatum.

The detailed conversations were opened at Lisbon on July 6. The Portuguese explained that they wished to give us the necessary facilities but in a manner which would attract the least notice. They asked us to begin by sending as few people as possible, and left no doubt that, once we were in the islands, we could expand our forces. Meanwhile on June 29 the Prime Minister had again asked for the authority of the President to let the Portuguese know that the United States associated themselves with the assurances which we were giving to Portugal. He also told the President of the Portuguese wish to restrict to British forces the facilities which were being given under the Anglo-Portuguese alliance. No answer had been received from the President or the State Department at the end of July.<sup>1</sup> On August 13 Mr. Winant replied to a second enquiry from Mr. Eden in a way that seemed to link an American promise of assurances with the grant of demands which the United States Government had been making.

The State Department had informed the British Embassy in Washington on July 7 that the United States Army Air Corps had already asked Pan-American Airways to explore the possibility of getting Portuguese consent to the establishment of landing facilities in the Azores under cover of supposedly commercial developments. Pan-American Airways had made an approach unofficially to the Portuguese Air Council. The United States Government now proposed to give official support, and asked for British backing. The Foreign Office replied that we did not expect any difficulty in securing landing facilities for American aircraft en route to Africa,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Winant, however, told Mr. Eden on July 19 that there would be no doubt about the American willingness to 'underwrite' our assurances.

but that it was inadvisable to ask for them while our negotiations were in progress. The State Department accepted this view, and also a Foreign Office suggestion that they should delay action on another proposal for the establishment of an American weather observation bureau in the islands.<sup>1</sup>

On their side the Portuguese seemed to be intending to delay the actual grant of facilities until two and a half months after the arrival of anti-aircraft and other defence material for which they had asked. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden agreed that we must fix a date. The Prime Minister suggested August 15;<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden thought this too early since our own expedition could not arrive before September 1. The Chiefs of Staff proposed September 15 as the latest date; the Prime Minister agreed that this date should be told to Dr. Salazar, with a warning of the consequences to the Anglo-Portuguese alliance if he did not accept it. The date was later moved to October 1. Dr. Salazar insisted that Portuguese military preparations would not be complete before October 15, but he accepted October 8. The agreement was signed on August 18.<sup>3</sup> The British entry took place on the arranged date.

The cooperation of the Portuguese was, and continued to be satisfactory, but trouble had arisen owing to the demands of the United States Chiefs of Staff at the beginning of September for what amounted to an American occupation of the islands with a force of about 10,000 men. The Foreign Office considered that the Americans were asking for much more than we had been able to obtain after invoking our special alliance with the Portuguese, and that most of the facilities which they required were duplicating those already provided under the Anglo-Portuguese agreement. The British Chiefs of Staff, with the approval of the Foreign Office, asked the Joint Staff

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<sup>1</sup> While the Anglo-Portuguese negotiations were in progress the United States Chiefs of Staff protested that they could not accept an agreement limiting the use of facilities to 'British Empire aircraft.' The Foreign Office again recommended that we should explain that as soon as we were in the islands we would try to extend our arrangements to include the Americans, but that it was most undesirable to introduce the American demands at an earlier stage. The British representatives negotiating the agreement had reported plainly on this point, and had said that the Portuguese Government had made it absolutely clear that the facilities were to be granted to us in accordance with the Anglo-Portuguese alliance; the word 'American' had had 'strong and unfavourable reactions.' Once we were in the islands, the matter would be on a different footing. The British Chiefs of Staff agreed with the Foreign Office. The British Embassy in Washington was instructed to speak in these terms to the State Department. (The Prime Minister on July 11 had put the matter in his own way to Mr. Eden: 'The great thing is to worm our way in and then, without raising any question of principles, swell ourselves out.')'

It appeared during the Quebec Conference that the United States Chiefs of Staff had not been told fully by the President of the facts mentioned in the Prime Minister's message of June 29 and that they felt that they had not been adequately consulted over the agreement. The Foreign Office also thought that American commercial air interests were exercising some influence in the matter, and that they might be suspecting similar pressure on the British side.

<sup>2</sup> The original minute has the figure '12' pencilled above '15'.

<sup>3</sup> It was, however, dated August 17.

Mission in Washington on September 18 to explain the difficulties in their proposals and to say that we were concentrating first upon ferry plans for American aircraft which could be put into effect, at least in their early stages, under British cover.

The Prime Minister, however, was more inclined to support the immediate American demands, though he asked Field-Marshal Sir J. Dill to explain to Admiral King that the Portuguese were afraid that the Americans wanted to stay in the Azores. Mr. Eden, however, at the suggestion of the Foreign Office, sent a minute to the Prime Minister that the Portuguese, on their view, had taken serious risks out of loyalty to their alliance; their action contrasted favourably with that of other neutrals, e.g. Turkey and Eire. We should try to secure for the Americans the advantages which we had obtained for ourselves, but if they wanted more, we should leave them to get it. Mr. Eden repeated this view later. He told the Prime Minister that the Americans did not understand that modern Portugal was not a country from which they could get everything by threats or bribes, and that Dr. Salazar was not the kind of man who wanted to 'climb upon the Allied band wagon' in good time.<sup>1</sup>

On October 14 Mr. Roosevelt telegraphed to the Prime Minister that he proposed to approach the Portuguese Government. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden welcomed this plan since it relieved them of responsibility in the matter; the President did not mention that he was not asking—as they had understood from a previous message—merely for facilities for air transport and ferrying, but was going back to the full American demands. Mr. G. F. Kennan, United States chargé d'affaires at Lisbon, told Sir R. Campbell that he expected a Portuguese refusal, and that he was applying for permission to fly home to explain the position. On his return Mr. Kennan himself was not altogether clear what the Americans wanted. Dr. Salazar repeated that he could not give to the United States Government, without breaking his neutrality, the facilities which he had allowed to Great Britain owing to the Anglo-Portuguese alliance. He was willing to let the Americans in fact have similar facilities, but only within the framework of the British agreement and theoretically on a formula that all American operational units would be temporarily on loan to the British Government.

A further and somewhat unnecessary argument dragged on over an American proposal to send an operational squadron to the islands. Dr. Salazar went as far as saying that the Portuguese would resist by force the landing of American combatant forces. The Foreign Office

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office thought that the United States Chiefs of Staff had shewn little interest in the political difficulties. Neither Admiral King nor General Arnold had attended the staff meeting in Washington at which Air Vice-Marshal Medhurst (who had taken a leading part in the negotiations with the Portuguese) had explained what the difficulties were.

thought the whole affair absurd; there was no reason why this particular squadron in the Azores should be American rather than British. The Prime Minister suggested that the Americans might wear some badge shewing that they were temporarily incorporated in the R.A.F. Finally, after more months of discussion it was agreed that the Americans should wear British insignia, with American insignia alongside in a rather less conspicuous form.

## Note to Chapter XX

### *The export of Portuguese wolfram to Germany*

There was a certain paradox in the fact that economic negotiations generally were easier with Spain than with Portugal. One reason was that in Spain General Franco left the arrangements almost entirely to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry where matters were argued on a basis of Spanish economic interests, whereas in Portugal Dr. Salazar himself undertook the negotiations, and brought into them his own sensitiveness about Portuguese sovereignty. Furthermore Portugal, with her overseas Empire, depended less than Spain on supplies from the Allies. Spain was in a far worse economic condition owing to the civil war, and, unlike Portugal, did not begin almost at once to acquire large sterling balances.

In January, 1942, when he was angry with the Allies over Timor, Dr. Salazar made an agreement allowing the Germans to export up to 2800 tons of wolfram in the year beginning on March 1, 1942. The Allies, after long and troublesome bargaining, secured a larger quantity—3400 tons—for themselves, but while they were negotiating for a higher proportion of the supply Dr. Salazar made another agreement<sup>1</sup> with the Germans. After the Anglo-Portuguese agreement over the Azores had brought only a formal protest from Germany to Portugal, the War Cabinet decided to try to secure a complete embargo on supplies of Portuguese wolfram to Germany. The Foreign Office thought it unlikely that Dr. Salazar would agree, but that, in view of the American pressure over the export of wolfram from Spain and Portugal, we ought to get a very drastic limitation. Sir R. Campbell proposed an embargo to Dr. Salazar on January 23, 1944; he was given no definite answer. Dr. Salazar was evidently waiting to see the result of the Allied negotiations with Spain. Hence the Foreign Office recommended in March that the Prime Minister should send Dr. Salazar a personal letter.

The Prime Minister therefore wrote a personal letter on March 15 asking why Portugal was continuing to supply Germany with material which prolonged the war, 'with all its attendant suffering and danger to the great values of Christian civilisation.' Dr. Salazar explained in a reply of March 28 why he could not go as far as an embargo. He also answered

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<sup>1</sup> The agreement was to run for twelve months from February 1, 1943.



the Prime Minister's moral argument by saying that, 'if England, our friend and ally, were the only enemy whom Germany was fighting,' the Prime Minister's words would find a 'more decisive echo than they can when it is known that the German war effort is likewise directed against other enemies whose activity against Christian civilisation . . . has unfortunately been well-marked.' As in the case of Spain, the whole matter began to lose its importance as the date of the cross-channel invasion approached. The Foreign Office thought that the best plan would have been an arrangement whereby Portugal would export no more wolfram to Germany than Spain, but Dr. Salazar would not accept this plan, and the Americans would not give up their demand for a complete embargo. Finally, on June 5, 1944, Dr. Salazar gave way, and imposed an embargo.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of these negotiations, see Medicott, II, cc. XI and XX.

## CHAPTER XXI

### Some problems in the co-ordination of Anglo-American policy in the Middle East, 1942-5

#### (i)

*The development of an American policy in the Middle East: the problem of Palestine: Zionists demands for, and Arab opposition to a Jewish State in Palestine: Arab proposals for closer union: the question of Jewish immigration into Palestine.*

BEFORE the entry of the United States into the war American official and military opinion was not greatly concerned with the Middle East. The President and his advisers seemed to think that the British Government, and especially the Prime Minister, exaggerated, for imperialist reasons, the strategic significance of the Middle East<sup>1</sup> in a war against the Axis Powers. Mr. Stimson, as Secretary for War, told the United States Chiefs of Staff in December, 1941, that Egypt, in spite of its importance for the British Commonwealth, was lower than West Africa and Persia in the American list of priorities. On the political side Americans generally knew little about British policy towards the Arab countries, and readily accepted the view that this policy (which in fact had accomplished more than that of any other Power for Arab liberation and advancement) had been merely one of exploitation. There was, indeed, a certain incongruity between American condemnation of British imperialism as the enforcement of alien rule on weaker peoples, and American support of Zionist claims to set up—by superior force—a State of Palestine against the wishes of the great majority of its inhabitants. Until the end of 1942, however, the problem of Palestine was in suspense; there could be no question of any long-term decision while the country was threatened by invasion.

In 1942 the United States Administration began to shew an increasing interest in Middle Eastern affairs. The President himself somewhat naively regarded the Middle East as a favourable area for the exercise of American activities which he distinguished sharply from those of British imperialism but which, in fact, seemed to shew many of the same features. This assertion of American interest was

<sup>1</sup> For this term, see above, Introduction, p. xxii, note 4.

likely to cause difficulties and misunderstandings with Great Britain. The Foreign Office, and British representatives in the Middle East, had long experience in adjusting British interests to those of France and Russia; they were disconcerted at the sudden appearance of another Great Power, especially in areas where British influence had been predominant, and a good relationship established over many years with Arab rulers and peoples. The situation was not made easier by the lack of consideration—or so it appeared from the British angle—with which the new American policy was at times conducted. Even in matters where agreement had been reached an unexpected turn might occur in American policy owing, as in the Palestine question, to Zionist influence or, as in the oil question, to personal and domestic rivalries within the United States Administration, or pressure from the great oil interests.

Anglo-American collaboration in the Middle East was therefore one of the major issues in British diplomacy during the last two years of the war. The fact that the questions in dispute did not cause more trouble shews the fundamental desire on both sides to reach agreement, but it is also evidence of the decline of British power. For financial reasons the British Government was unable to take major decisions against American wishes or to resist proposals likely to substitute American for British influence when these proposals were backed by the immense resources of the United States. The prolonged and anxious discussions within the British Government over the future of Palestine were inconclusive owing to the difficulty of finding a solution which was at once practicable and also acceptable to American opinion.

The extreme difficulty, and indeed the impossibility of satisfying both Jewish and Arab claims in Palestine had been shewn by the militant Zionists in the United States at a most critical period in the war when it was of military importance to avoid the risk of civil disturbance in the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> In May, 1942, an American Zionist Conference at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, passed resolutions (i) that a Jewish military force should be formed to fight under its own flag and under the High Command of the United Nations,<sup>2</sup> (ii) that Palestine should be established as a Jewish Commonwealth, and (iii) that the Jewish Agency should be vested with the control of immigration into Palestine. The Zionists had thus come forward definitely with the demand for the establishment of a Jewish State in

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<sup>1</sup> On May 6, 1942, a few days before the Biltmore resolutions, Lord Cranborne had stated in the House of Commons that Great Britain would not enter into any commitments regarding the future of Palestine without consulting the Jews and the Arabs.

<sup>2</sup> The question of a Jewish military force (about which Mr. Churchill held strongly favourable views, see Churchill, II, 154, 559 and 564) falls outside the scope of this *History*. Large numbers of Jews were fighting in the Allied armies (and in the Resistance Movements) but, from the Zionist point of view, they were fighting 'anonymously.'

Palestine after the war.<sup>1</sup> Some at least of the Zionist leaders had spoken of their intention of using force to secure their aims. The view of the British authorities was that fighting might well break out in Palestine after the defeat of the Axis was certain, and before the end of the war, i.e. at a time when the Allies could not spare troops to put down disorder.<sup>2</sup>

The British authorities had long regarded the large numbers of arms illegally held by the Jews as a danger to security.<sup>3</sup> The War Cabinet had decided in 1940 not to order measures for their seizure. This decision had not been changed. The main reasons for it was that action to seize the arms might have lost American Jewish support in the war, and would have caused local trouble involving the detention in Palestine of British troops urgently needed elsewhere. In the spring of 1943 the British military authorities considered that forcible disarmament would be a major undertaking which would require at least two infantry divisions.

The Jewish plans, and, above all, their military organisations, obviously brought counter-moves by the Arabs. Although the Arabs had no secret and illegal forces in Palestine corresponding to the Jewish organisations, they too held considerable quantities of arms, and many Palestinian Arabs—and Jews—had been trained in the police or the British forces. It was impossible to say how much military help the Palestinian Arabs might get from the Arab States generally; these States were already considering unity of action, primarily, though not solely, in order to safeguard themselves against the establishment of a Jewish State by force. The British Government had recognised indirectly a common Arab interest by inviting delegations from Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Yemen to the Round Table Conference in London in 1939 on the Palestinian question. In a speech of May 29, 1941, Mr. Eden had said that the British Government would welcome any scheme for strengthening the cultural, economic and political ties between the Arab States which had general Arab approval. At the time of the Iraqi declaration of

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<sup>1</sup> The demand was not new. It had been put forward, for example, in various Zionist resolutions since 1939, and by Dr. Weizmann himself to Mr. Churchill in December, 1939. The policy laid down in the British White Paper of 1939 was the establishment within ten years of a State in the government of which Jews and Arabs would each take part.

<sup>2</sup> American observers with local knowledge of the situation also realised this danger. In January, 1943, Colonel Hoskins, an American officer, told the Minister of State that after a tour of the Middle East he was reporting to the State Department that fighting might break out between Zionists and Arabs before the end of the war, and possibly even in the spring of 1943.

<sup>3</sup> There were two powerful and well-armed secret Jewish military organisations in Palestine—the Hagana, of which the leadership was generally associated with the Jewish Agency, and a smaller para-military organisation known as the Irgun Tzvai Leumi. The Hagana was said in the early part of 1943 to have a strength of about 80,000, and the Irgun Tzvai Leumi about 6–8,000. They were adding to their arms by organised thefts from British supply centres.

war against Germany in January, 1943, Nuri Pasha, Prime Minister of Iraq, who had taken the lead in promoting plans of Arab federation, sent a long memorandum to Mr. Casey recommending that the United Nations should declare the federation of Syria, the Lebanon, Palestine, and Transjordan as the basis of an Arab Union. Iraq would adhere at once to this Union and the other Arab States would be invited to join it. Nuri Pasha proposed that the Jews of Palestine and the Christians of Lebanon should be given semi-autonomy under an international guarantee, and subject to supervision by the 'Greater Syrian' State. Mr. Eden repeated in the House of Commons on February 24, 1943, his previous assurance to the Arab States, but added that the initiative must come from the Arabs themselves, and that hitherto no scheme had been generally approved by them.<sup>1</sup>

The maintenance of friendly relations between the Arab States and Great Britain thus turned to a large extent on the British attitude towards the irreconcilable claims of Jews and Arabs. Furthermore in 1943 both sets of claimants realised that the danger of an Axis invasion had now disappeared, and that one all-important question had to be settled within the next twelve or fifteen months. Under the terms of the White Paper of 1939 Jewish immigration up to a figure of 75,000 into Palestine was assured for a period of five years ending on March 31, 1944. Thereafter, if the policy in the White Paper were maintained, the continuance of immigration would depend upon Arab consent. Arab consent was most unlikely; the opponents (including Mr. Churchill) of the White Paper had indeed assumed in 1939 that it would be refused.

Mr. Churchill continued to regard the White Paper as a breach of faith to the Jews. He circulated a note to the War Cabinet on April 28, 1943, that, while he did not favour any new declaration, he could not agree to give the Arab majority power to cut off all Jewish immigration. He thought that we should examine the possibilities of making Eritrea and Tripolitania into Jewish colonies affiliated, if so desired, to the National Home. Mr. Eden circulated a memorandum to the War Cabinet on May 10. He considered that Zionist propaganda in the United States was largely responsible for the increase in tension. He gave details about this propaganda and said that, while Mr. Hull and the State Department had been careful to avoid any

<sup>1</sup> Nuri Pasha went to Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem, and Cairo in July and August, 1943, in order to explain his plans to other Arab leaders. He also asked the views of King Ibn Saud, but for dynastic reasons the King was not favourable to the 'Greater Syria' plan. After further negotiations the Arab States agreed to hold a preparatory meeting at Alexandria, and, later, a general conference. The preparatory meeting issued a protocol on October 7, 1944, proposing the establishment of a League of Arab States. After a meeting early in 1945 of the Foreign Ministers of the States, a general Arab Congress met in Cairo in March, 1945, and agreed to the signature of a pact constituting the League.

commitments, other members of the Administration had been less cautious. Mr. Eden was uncertain whether Zionist propaganda had not overreached itself in the United States, but the campaign had an outward appearance of success, and had increased Arab anxiety. The Arabs believed that Jewish influence predominated in the United States; hence there was little reason for them to support the Allies if victory were to result in Palestine becoming a Jewish State. The Arab leaders had already made representations to the British Government about Zionist propaganda; Nuri Pasha had suggested that the United Nations should make a definite pronouncement that they would not support the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine.

Mr. Eden said that Lord Halifax had told members of the Administration—with varying success—of our anxiety about American support of Zionist propaganda. He (Mr. Eden) now proposed a more formal warning on the matter to the United States Government. He thought that the warning would have the approval of moderate American Jewish opinion—e.g. the American Jewish Committee and the American Council for Judaism.<sup>1</sup>

(ii)

*American proposal for a declaration on Palestine: withdrawal of the proposal owing to Zionist pressure: report of the British Ministerial Committee on Palestine: Foreign Office views on the report: President Truman's letter of July 24, 1945, to Mr. Churchill.*

On June 10, 1943, before the War Cabinet had considered Mr. Eden's proposal, Mr. Winant wrote to Mr. Eden that the State Department were much concerned over the 'spiral of increasing tension' in Palestine, and that they suggested a declaration by the United Nations or, if this plan were impracticable or too slow, a statement by the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China. The statement, in the American draft, declared that it would be 'helpful to the war effort' if 'discussions and activities of a political nature relating to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Casey also submitted a paper on June 17 giving more details of the Jewish secret military organisations, and of the recognition of their leaders that their programme would lead to disorder. Mr. Casey thought that we could not repudiate our assurances in the White Paper to the Arabs without turning the whole of Arab opinion against us, and providing the Russians with an opportunity to bring the Middle East into their sphere of influence. Mr. Casey proposed an Anglo-American declaration that, subject to the fulfilment of the strategic requirements necessary to preserve world peace, the two Governments were prepared to accept any solution of the Palestine problem agreed between the Arabs and Jews of Palestine, but that they would not permit forceful changes in the administration of Palestine, and, in particular, that they would regard the forcible establishment of a Jewish State as contrary to the Atlantic Charter and the principles upon which the peace settlement must be based.

Palestine . . . were to cease. As in the case of other territorial problems, it is not . . . essential that a settlement of the Palestine question be achieved prior to the conclusion of the war. Nevertheless, if the interested Arabs and Jews can reach a friendly understanding through their own efforts before the end of the war, such a development would be highly desirable.'

The Foreign Office did not favour a declaration by the United Nations, or the four Powers, but thought that a joint or simultaneous statement by the British and United States Governments would be of great value. They accepted the American draft with certain changes, and, in particular, the addition of a phrase that the two Governments would not permit any changes by force in the status of Palestine. The War Cabinet agreed with the Foreign Office view. They also decided (i) that the period of immigration laid down in the White Paper should be extended beyond March 31, 1944, without prejudice to any later decision when the figure of 75,000 had been reached;<sup>1</sup> (ii) that they would not change, for the time, their policy with regard to illegal stores of arms.<sup>2</sup> Finally the War Cabinet on July 12 appointed a Ministerial Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. H. Morrison, Home Secretary, and including representatives of the three parties, to consider long-term policy with regard to Palestine.

On July 23, after agreement had been reached about the text, Mr. Winant told the Foreign Office that the State Department proposed to issue the declaration on July 26. This date was postponed until July 28, but on the evening of July 27 Lord Halifax telegraphed that the State Department wanted postponement for another week. Lord Halifax said that the Zionists had heard of the declaration and were lobbying against it. On August 9 Mr. Winant let the Foreign Office know that the United States Government had decided not to issue any declaration. He explained that the War Department had come to the conclusion that the situation in Palestine was now less 'inflammable' than they had thought, and that it would be better to leave matters alone. Lord Halifax reported on August 10 that Mr. Hull had told him that Mr. Stimson had refused to support the declaration, and that the State Department felt that they could not issue it on their own responsibility. Lord Halifax was sure that the reason for withdrawal was Zionist pressure, especially on the President.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This decision was announced in the House of Commons on November 10, 1943. (Parl. Deb. 5th Ser., H. of C., Vol. 393, cols. 1151-2.) It was stated that the number of 'quota' immigrants so far had been just under 44,000.

<sup>2</sup> The War Cabinet considered that no measures should be taken until they could be applied equally to Jews and Arabs. The Jews had most of their arms in large *caches*, while most of the Arab arms were held by individuals. Since a house-to-house search was impracticable, any action against *caches* of arms would affect the Jews and not the Arabs.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the facts appeared in the press. Further information from the British Embassy indicated that the Zionist pressure had been exercised principally through Mr. Morgenthau, Mr. Baruch, Mr. Stimson, and Mr. Welles.



The Foreign Office were most disquieted at the circumstances of the withdrawal of the declaration. There was, in fact, no improvement in the Palestinian situation, and it was dangerous for the Zionist extremists to think that they could paralyse Anglo-American action by means of political pressure in the United States. Mr. Eden, therefore, raised the matter with Mr. Hull at the Quebec Conference. Mr. Hull promised to consider the British view, but nothing was done except to agree to keep the statement in reserve on a month to month basis. The President was in favour—if any statement were made—of a shorter text to the effect that, in view of military considerations, the Palestinian question could not at present be taken up. The Prime Minister wished to add that, in any case, British policy would not be influenced by acts of violence.

On December 13 Lord Halifax reported that Mr. Hull had spoken to him about the increasing Zionist pressure on the Administration. Mr. Hull therefore wanted to make some public statement about the interest of the United States Government in the Palestinian problem. The Foreign Office agreed about the value of a public statement, though they hoped that Mr. Hull might also warn the Zionists of the danger of their agitation, and that the President, in reporting to Congress on the Cairo and Teheran Conferences, might say something about the mistake of treating Palestine in isolation and not as part of a general Middle Eastern problem. Mr. Hull, however, said no more about his proposal, and Lord Halifax thought that he had given it up.

On January 27, 1944, resolutions were introduced into both Houses of Congress proposing that the United States Government should use their good offices, and take appropriate measures to secure the free entry of Jews into Palestine, in order that the country might become a 'free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth.' The State Department asked for the British view on the best way of dealing with these resolutions. Lord Halifax telegraphed that he proposed to say that we did not wish to express any opinion on action by Congress, but that the State Department might care to point out that under the White Paper Jewish immigration would continue with Arab consent. Did Congress propose that it should continue against the wishes of the majority of the population, and were they prepared to use force for this purpose?

Lord Halifax telegraphed on March 2 that he had heard from the State Department that General Marshall had given evidence in a secret session of the Foreign Relations Committee against the proposed Palestine resolutions. Since Mr. Stimson also opposed them on behalf of the War Department the resolutions were withdrawn. Lord

Halifax reported a week later a statement by the two Chairmen of the American Zionist Emergency Council that President Roosevelt had authorised the Council to say that the United States Government had never given its approval to the White Paper of 1939. The Foreign Office regarded this statement as most unfair, since it suggested that the United States Government had been consulted about the White Paper, and had refused to agree to it. Lord Halifax proposed to answer in a public speech some of the worst slanders against the British Government,<sup>1</sup> but the Prime Minister thought this plan undesirable, and the Foreign Office were not sure whether any statement—however mild in its terms—might not do more harm than good.<sup>2</sup>

The Ministerial Committee on Palestine submitted a report on December 20, 1943. Their main conclusions were (i) that partition was the best and possibly the only solution, (ii) that we should try to bring about an association of Levant States consisting of a Jewish State, a Jerusalem Territory (under a British High Commissioner), the larger part of the Lebanon, and a Greater Syria comprising Syria, Transjordan, the southern Lebanon, and the Arab areas of Palestine, (iii) that the integrity of the Levant States should be guaranteed by Anglo-French or Anglo-Franco-American treaties providing, *inter alia*, for the safeguarding of British and French strategic interests, (iv) that an International Body consisting of British, French, and possibly American representatives should be established to arbitrate on matters referred to it by the Levant States, and to supervise the observance of their treaty obligations, including the protection of minority rights.<sup>3</sup>

The Prime Minister, who throughout this time held to his view that the White Paper was a breach of faith with the Jews, commented favourably on the report but wanted to postpone any announcement on policy until after the war with Germany. The Foreign Office, on the other hand, were more doubtful. They thought it necessary to have

<sup>1</sup> e.g. that they were preventing the escape of European Jews from German persecution. The Foreign Office regarded the American criticisms directed against Great Britain on the subject of Jewish immigration as the more unfair in that the United States Government were themselves unwilling to increase to any appreciable extent the number of Jewish immigrants from Europe into the United States.

<sup>2</sup> During the visit of Dr. Bowman and Mr. Wallace Murray to London in April, 1944 (see below, p. 396), Mr. Murray asked Sir M. Peterson whether a joint Anglo-American declaration would still be of use in diminishing local tension in Palestine. Sir M. Peterson said that this tension was due largely to agitation in the United States, and that, if a declaration would be helpful in America, we would certainly consider it. Dr. Bowman thought the agitation was not having much effect on American opinion. Mr. Murray gave Sir M. Peterson the text of a draft statement for use if circumstances made its issue desirable.

<sup>3</sup> The report was not unanimous about the actual scheme of partition. The Chiefs of Staff also considered that the scheme of partition should be changed.

the views of Lord Killearn and Sir K. Cornwallis, and to reconsider the scheme of partition. They also thought that we ought not to take any decision, since we wanted to remain free to say that we had postponed a decision until the end of the war. The War Cabinet merely accepted the report in principle, and on the understanding that details could be further examined before a final decision was reached.

Here the matter remained for some months. Mr. Eden asked for the views of Lord Killearn and Sir K. Cornwallis. Lord Killearn thought that the Arabs would oppose partition very strongly, and that the best plan would be for us to keep Palestine as a vital link in our defence system. The Foreign Office did not regard this plan as either possible or desirable. Sir K. Cornwallis also thought that Arab opinion would regard the establishment of a Jewish State as a breach of faith, and that our relations with the Arab States would be permanently impaired. At the beginning of June, 1944, the Foreign Office suggested, as a possible alternative to partition, the establishment of a Palestinian State of which the sovereignty would lie with the United Nations and would be exercised by a High Commissioner or Governor-General who would be responsible to the United Nations but take his day-to-day instructions from the British Government.<sup>1</sup> The idea of a 'provisional settlement' or temporary mandate would disappear. Jewish immigration could be resumed, but the Arabs need no longer be afraid that it aimed at creating a Jewish majority upon whom a permanent settlement would be based. The limit might be fixed at a figure allowing a Jewish population about 100,000 less than the Arabs. This figure would permit some 300-400,000 new Jewish immigrants.

Mr. Eden did not circulate these suggestions to the Palestine Committee until September. He then added a note on the Foreign Office arguments against partition and included the text of Sir K. Cornwallis' letter pointing out that partition would aggravate the problem of Jewish immigration, since the Arabs would accept immigration only on a guarantee that neither Palestine as a whole nor any part of it would become a Jewish political State. The Zionists would not be deterred by the small size of such a State from filling it with immigrants beyond its capacity. They would then try to expand the State over all Palestine and Transjordan.

The Palestine Committee submitted a revised report on September 26, 1944, in which they maintained their plan for partition.<sup>2</sup> They thought it impossible to control mass immigration into Palestine or to

<sup>1</sup> An analogous case, in practice, was that of the Governor-General of the Sudan in relation to the joint sovereignty of Great Britain and Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> The Committee still regarded the formation of a Greater Syria as desirable, but considered this step impracticable for the time. They suggested, for the immediate future, the establishment of a southern Syrian State comprising Transjordan and the Arab area of Palestine.

get any agreement between Jews and Arabs on the number of immigrants. A bi-national State was therefore impracticable, but 'while neither race can be permitted to dominate the whole of Palestine, there is no reason why each race should not rule part of it.' In a note of comment on this revised report the Foreign Office repeated their view that partition would not remove Arab fears, especially if the Jews encouraged large-scale immigration, and that in any case the proposed scheme of partition was unfair to the Arabs. The Foreign Office also pointed out that for the last ten years it had not been possible to control Jewish immigration because illegal immigrants expelled from Palestine were liable to persecution or death if they went back to countries under German occupation. These conditions would not continue after the defeat of Germany, and there would be no humanitarian reason why the Arabs should be expected to take large additional numbers into Palestine or to allow the establishment of a Jewish State. The Foreign Office considered that in any case we ought to try to get American approval of our plan before we put it forward, but that we should wait until after the Presidential election. We were also committed to prior consultation with the Arabs and the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office continued during the first half of 1945 to discuss various solutions,<sup>2</sup> but no decision was reached before the Potsdam Conference. At the Conference President Truman sent to Mr. Churchill on July 24 a somewhat terse note hoping that the British Government would 'take steps to lift the restrictions of the White Paper on Jewish immigration into Palestine' and that the Prime Minister himself would let him have at his early convenience his 'ideas on the settlement of the Palestine question so that we can at a later but not too distant date discuss the problem in concrete terms.'

Owing to the change of government in Great Britain a reply could not be sent to this note at once. The Foreign Office thought that the reply would have to be worded carefully because the President would certainly make it known at least in general terms after his return to the United States. We ought also to correct the impression in the note that Palestine rather than the countries of which they were nationals was the proper home of all Jews. Finally, it was significant that, while assuming the right to discuss the Palestine problem, Mr. Truman did not suggest that the United States Government might share in the responsibility if, as was almost certain, a settlement

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 386, note 1. President Roosevelt, in a letter of April 5, 1945, to King Ibn Saud, had also renewed previous assurances that the United States Government desired that 'no decision be taken regarding the basic situation in (Palestine) without full consultation with both Arabs and Jews.'

<sup>2</sup> The Jewish terrorist activities, which included the assassination of Lord Moyne on November 6, 1944, did not affect these discussions about a 'long-range' solution. The Jewish Agency repudiated the terrorists, and collaborated with the British authorities in attempts to suppress them.

had to be imposed by force. The Foreign Office suggested a reply that the new Government could not give the President a statement of British policy until they had had time to consider the matter. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin agreed with the terms of this reply.

(iii)

*Foreign Office proposals for an Anglo-American discussion of Middle Eastern policy: the question of oil reserves: American claims to a predominant economic interest in Saudi Arabia.*

In the early summer of 1943 Mr. Casey suggested to Mr. Eden that a closer understanding was desirable between the British and United States Governments on questions of policy in the Middle East. The Foreign Office had been disquieted at the increasing lack of consideration shewn by the Americans for British interests and at what seemed to be almost a personal unfriendliness in the State Department.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden therefore proposed to the War Cabinet on July 12, 1943, that we should send to the United States Government a memorandum explaining British policy, and suggest that a member of the State Department should come to London for discussions. Mr. Eden gave the War Cabinet examples of some of the more recent difficulties with the State Department, and our own uncertainty about American policy in the Middle East. He thought that, while we could not expect the Americans to sacrifice their interests to ours in the Middle East, we might persuade them, in view of the greater importance of the Middle East to the British Commonwealth and Empire, to allow us a certain local political initiative.

The War Cabinet agreed with Mr. Casey's and Mr. Eden's suggestions, and thought that a memorandum might be sent to Lord Halifax as a basis for conversations with the President or Mr. Hull. Lord Halifax waited for some time before raising the question;<sup>2</sup> there were further delays because the State Department wanted the discussions to be held in Washington, and the Foreign Office considered

<sup>1</sup> See also above, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> During the summer of 1943 five United States Senators (including two members of a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Truman investigating the American defence programme) went on a world tour inspecting American forces, installations, etc. Their report was printed in the Congressional Record. Some of their conclusions were extremely critical of British action. The British view was that this criticism was ignorant and ill-founded. The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Hopkins on October 10 that he proposed to make a statement correcting some of the errors of fact. Mr. Hopkins thought the Prime Minister's statement 'very good,' but advised against mentioning the Senators by name, since other 'unfriendly or misinformed people' in the United States were making similar criticisms. The Prime Minister did not issue his statement, but said in reply to a parliamentary question on October 19 that he was having a full statement of the facts drawn up for publication if necessary. See Parl Deb. 5th Ser., H. of C., vol. 392, cols. 1211-12.

that it was desirable to hold them in London where the British case could be put more fully by the Departments concerned. Finally the State Department agreed that Mr. Wallace Murray, of the State Department, and Dr. I. Bowman, Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Council in the State Department on foreign policy, should come to London with Mr. Stettinius in April, 1944.<sup>1</sup> Six meetings were held at the Foreign Office with Mr. Murray and Dr. Bowman.

The Foreign Office regarded the meetings as generally satisfactory. They took place at a time when British and American representatives were discussing in Washington the question of oil reserves in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> This question was given wide publicity in the United States owing to reports of the rapid depletion of American oil reserves. The United States Government had set up in July, 1943, a Petroleum Reserves Corporation to safeguard American supplies by acquiring and developing oilfields outside the United States.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Harold L. Ickes, who directed this Corporation, soon came into conflict with the American oil companies, and also with the Secretary of State. Mr. Hull wanted a general discussion with Great Britain on oil reserves; Mr. Ickes was in favour of negotiations at Cabinet level under his own direction. The State Department invited the British Government on December 2, 1943, to an exchange of views 'at the earliest possible moment' on oil reserves in the Middle East. The Foreign Office thought that this exchange should take place in London, and at an 'expert level.' They telegraphed to Lord Halifax that, in view of the preoccupation of Ministers with the problems of the cross-Channel invasion, there would be great difficulty in sending a ministerial delegation to Washington. The State Department also suggested at first that discussions should begin at an expert level, but on February 15 Lord Halifax reported that the Americans had suddenly changed their views, and proposed to announce that their delegation would be at a Cabinet level. Lord Halifax protested strongly against this change; the Foreign Office pointed out to the Prime Minister that, on the British plan, the talks would be conducted by officials and technicians, with little publicity or political pressure, and without committing either Government. The American proposal for

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<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> I have dealt with these complicated and technical discussions on oil only from the Foreign Office point of view, i.e. in relation to their repercussions on Anglo-American political relations.

<sup>3</sup> The American interest in Middle Eastern oil had greatly increased in 1933 when the Standard Oil Company of California had obtained a large exploratory concession in Saudi Arabia. The Company—renamed in 1936 the California-Arabian Standard Oil Company and in 1944 the Arabian-American Oil Company (Aramco)—began the exploitation of oil in the Dhahran Peninsula in 1938, and, a year later, built a pipe-line from the oilfield in this area to the Persian Gulf.



a conference opened by the President, and with Mr. Hull in charge of the proceedings, might bring about public demands for the surrender of British rights which we should have to refuse.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President on February 20 that the oil question ought surely to be considered with patience 'between us before it is flung into public discussion on both sides of the Atlantic. A wrangle about oil would be a poor prelude for the tremendous joint enterprise and sacrifice to which we have bound ourselves. . . . There is apprehension in some quarters here that the United States has a desire to deprive us of our oil assets in the Middle East, on which, among other things, the whole supply of our Navy depends. . . .' Mr. Churchill said that 'International Conferences at the highest level should surely be carefully prepared beforehand'; he therefore asked the President whether it would not be better, as a first step, to hold 'official and technical talks.'

The President replied on February 22 rejecting this proposal. He answered the Prime Minister's reference to British anxiety about American intentions by saying that he was 'disturbed about the rumour that the British wish to horn in on Saudi Arabian oil reserves.'<sup>2</sup> Mr. Roosevelt agreed that 'the actual working technical discussions should be at the expert staff level,' but 'in view of the great long-range importance of oil to the post-war international security and economic arrangements,' he was convinced 'that these technical discussions should take place under the guidance of a group at Cabinet level.' Mr. Roosevelt therefore wished to preside at the first meeting. He wanted all the discussions to be held in Washington, and to set no limitation on the subjects to be discussed. He assured Mr. Churchill that the result would be a 'mutually satisfactory agreement.'

The Prime Minister replied on February 23 that the War Cabinet had expressed the view that the enquiry should be in the first instance on an official level in order to ascertain the facts, and that it should take place in London. They had also wished to state in Parliament

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand the Foreign Office, while considering that the Americans would have no justification in asking us to cede oil resources to them, noted that we ought to keep in mind the amount of oil which we were receiving from the United States, and our dependence upon American equipment for the production and refining of oil, and for tankers. A refusal even to discuss oil problems with the United States Government would do us great harm, and embarrass our friends (including Mr. Ickes) in the United States.

<sup>2</sup> On March 1 Lord Halifax telegraphed that General Patrick Hurley had said that he was advising the President not to allow the British to supply any arms to Saudi Arabia, since he had heard, 'on the best authority,' that the Foreign Office had given instructions that American interests were to be 'squeezed out of Saudi Arabia.' General Macready, Chief of the British Army Staff in Washington, had told General Hurley that this report was 'nonsense,' but General Hurley was unconvinced. Lord Halifax was instructed on March 3 to say to General Hurley (who had previously made unfounded criticisms, when on a special mission for the President in Iran, on the unfriendliness of British policy) from Mr. Eden that the report was false, and to ask him not to spread stories of this kind. Lord Halifax also complained to Mr. Hull and Mr. Stettinius. Mr. Stettinius did not try to defend General Hurley.



that no proposal would be made to change the existing ownership of oil resources in the Middle East or elsewhere. The Prime Minister added: 'Your telegram dismisses all these points, and, if you will allow me to say so, seemed to convey your decision on these matters.' Mr. Churchill said that the War Cabinet were much disturbed at the possibility of a wide difference opening between the two Governments 'on such a subject and at such a time.'

The President replied on March 3 asking Mr. Churchill to accept his assurance that the United States Government were not 'making sheeps' eyes' at British oilfields in Iran or Iraq. The Foreign Office thought that we could engage in the conversations without risk to our interests. With the approval of the War Cabinet the Prime Minister replied on March 7 that we accepted the President's assurance, and agreed to discussions in Washington though we still held that they should begin at an official and expert level. The Prime Minister said that he was likely to be asked in Parliament about the talks, and would have to make it clear that no question would arise of any transfer of existing rights.

The President accepted the Prime Minister's conditions. The talks at an expert level were held between April 18 and May 3. They resulted in a draft agreement which the British representatives regarded as generally satisfactory. The Foreign Office were now most anxious to go on to the next stage in the negotiations without delay; the Prime Minister inclined to wait until after the Presidential election. Mr. Eden, however, on the advice of Lord Halifax, strongly recommended the conclusion of a definite agreement at once. Finally a ministerial delegation headed by Lord Beaverbrook went to Washington in the latter part of July and signed an agreement on August 8.<sup>1</sup> The agreement, which would have set up an International Petroleum Commission, in fact came to nothing owing to opposition from the American oil industry. The President suggested a revision of the terms to meet the objections of the industry, but at the end of the war the matter was still under discussion.

Throughout these oil negotiations the Foreign Office had been, on the technical side, no more than a channel of communication; their intervention to hasten Cabinet and departmental decisions in London was due to their realisation of the importance of meeting American wishes in a matter which was arousing wide popular feeling in the United States and a good deal of distrust of British motives. The Foreign Office, with the agreement of the Chiefs of Staff, regarded

<sup>1</sup> The War Cabinet congratulated Lord Beaverbrook on the success of the negotiations. The Foreign Office and the British Embassy in Washington, though approving of the agreement, were more critical of the handling of the question on the British side.

the development of American interest in Middle Eastern oil as, on balance, favourable to British interests since it provided a powerful counterweight to any Russian designs.

These large considerations of policy did not prevent a good deal of local rivalry and discord in the areas primarily concerned, especially in Saudi Arabia. Here again the Foreign Office was not unaware that the development of a great oil industry would change the economy of a tribal kingdom, backward in culture, and, apart from its oil, poor in natural resources and hitherto drawing its revenues almost entirely from pilgrims to the Moslem Holy Places. On the other hand, the Foreign Office seems to have assumed, at first, that this development might take place without the substitution of American for British political influence. Saudi Arabia had hitherto been an area of British influence, and the friendship and trust of King Ibn Saud, whom Great Britain had protected and helped in his rise to power, were of great value to the British Government in reassuring Arab and Moslem opinion.

At the outbreak of the war in 1939 the Americans did not even have separate diplomatic representation in Saudi Arabia. Until 1942, when the United States Government opened a Legation at Jedda, Saudi-American relations had been dealt with locally by the United States Minister to Egypt. King Ibn Saud had received a British subsidy in 1940, 1941, and 1942 in view of the loss of revenue which he had suffered from the temporary cutting off of overseas pilgrimages to Mecca. Towards the end of 1942 the California-Arabian Standard Oil Company began to be concerned—in fact, unnecessarily—that British influence over King Ibn Saud through this subsidy would harm American interests in Saudi Arabia after the war. They argued that, since Great Britain was receiving large sums in Lend-Lease from the United States, the British subsidy amounted to an indirect form of Lend-Lease to Saudi Arabia. In February, 1943, President Roosevelt declared Saudi Arabia eligible for Lend-Lease.

Shortly before Mr. Wallace Murray's visit to London in 1944 the Foreign Office drew up a memorandum pointing out that in future the main support of Saudi Arabia would be the revenue from the American oil industry. The Americans were already suspecting us of trying to exclude them or at least to oppose any increase in their interest. We should therefore make it clear to Mr. Wallace Murray that we did not wish to prevent the United States from taking an increasing part in Saudi Arabian affairs corresponding to the importance of their commercial interest. We thought, however, that the United States Government should recognise that there were long-standing mutual relations of a most satisfactory kind between King Ibn Saud and the British Government, and that we also had a strong economic as well as a political interest in Saudi Arabia in

addition to our general interest in territory neighbouring on Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq, and our vital imperial communications.

Before Mr. Wallace Murray came to London, an American military mission had arrived in Saudi Arabia without the agreement or even the knowledge of the British Government. Mr. Wallace Murray explained that this mission was intended solely to instruct Saudi Arabians in the use of arms provided under Lend-Lease, and that it would subsequently be withdrawn. Mr. Jordan, British Minister at Jedda,<sup>1</sup> however, telegraphed on April 16 that the Americans wanted to extend the scope of the instructional mission, and that—doubtless for this reason—King Ibn Saud had asked whether we would send a military mission composed of Moslem officers in order to enable him to meet criticism that he was becoming increasingly dependent on foreign Christian Powers.

Mr. Wallace Murray told the Foreign Office that the State Department would not favour a mission composed of Moslem officers, and that it would be better to offer a joint military mission under a British officer who was not a Moslem. After Mr. Wallace Murray's return to the United States, the State Department telegraphed their agreement to a joint military mission, but claimed for themselves the leadership on any 'economic or financial mission.' The Foreign Office were now in some difficulty because the Treasury considered that we should insist upon British leadership of an economic mission,<sup>2</sup> while the War Office did not want to give up British leadership of a military mission. The Foreign Office did not think that either mission would be of much use; the financial mission in particular would be unpopular. The Americans, however, were unlikely to change their attitude, though there would be difficulty in persuading King Ibn Saud—who had asked us for the mission in order to avoid accepting Americans—to agree to their proposals.

The Foreign Office replied on June 8 accepting the proposal for a joint military mission under a British officer, but pointed out that King Ibn Saud might be unwilling to receive a Christian officer. There was at present no question of an economic or financial mission. The King had merely asked for a Sunni Moslem financial adviser. The

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<sup>1</sup> One of the local difficulties in the way of Anglo-American cooperation was that the Americans believed that Mr. Jordan, whose relations with King Ibn Saud were excellent, was working against American interests. The Foreign Office defended Mr. Jordan strongly against these charges, and complained—in their view, with better reason—of the aggressive and unfriendly attitude of Mr. Moose, the United States Minister. In 1945 both Ministers were withdrawn to other posts, though the Foreign Office continued to have confidence that Mr. Jordan had carried out his instructions to act in close cooperation with the Americans.

<sup>2</sup> King Ibn Saud had asked the British Government for an adviser to reorganise Saudi Arabian finances. Since the Saudi Arabian Treasury was at Mecca, the adviser would have to be a Sunni Moslem. The Government of India had been able to secure the services of a suitable Indian Moslem expert for the post.

Secretary of State agreed that, if and when the question of an economic mission arose, the leadership should be determined 'according to which party has the predominant interest in Saudi Arabian economy and finance at the time.'

The State Department sent a somewhat brusque reply on July 7 through the United States Embassy. They recognised the Near East as an area of 'primary British military operational responsibility,' but insisted that the 'predominant interest in Saudi Arabian economy' was 'unquestionably American in character' and would 'presumably remain so for many years to come.' The State Department therefore proposed a joint military mission headed by a 'British officer of Anglo-Saxon extraction' and an American financial adviser, either singly or as the head of a joint financial mission.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office tried again later in the year to persuade the State Department to agree to a Sunni Moslem officer, but without success.

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<sup>1</sup> The State Department suggested that King Ibn Saud should get over the difficulty of sending a Christian adviser to Mecca by moving his Treasury elsewhere.

## CHAPTER XXII

### Great Britain, the United States, and Italy from June, 1944, to June, 1945

#### (i)

*The Anglo-American declaration of September 26, 1944: the Italian governmental crisis of November, 1944: British opposition to the appointment of Count Sforza as Foreign Minister: Mr. Stettinius' statement of December 5: British protests against the statement: Anglo-American recognition of Signor Bonomi's new administration, December 14, 1944.*

IN June, 1944, the Foreign Office did not think that, with the liberation of Rome, they had come to the end of their difficulties over Italian political dissensions and claims. They regarded Signor Bonomi's administration<sup>1</sup> as unlikely to last for more than a few months. They expected Count Sforza to try to upset it with the intention of becoming Prime Minister. In any case the Italians would go on asking for concessions, and look for support from the important body of Italian-American opinion in the United States. For this reason, the Foreign Office had thought that we might be wiser to negotiate a preliminary peace treaty with Italy in which—instead of making concessions piecemeal—we could set them off against the severe terms which we would should have to enforce, e.g. with regard to colonies and frontiers. The State Department, however, had not favoured the plan, and the Prime Minister was firmly against it. He insisted that the Italian Government had no representative authority, and held office only as the result of their own intrigues. The industrial north might later repudiate a treaty signed by them. If we told them now that Italy would lose her colonies, and have to give up territory in the northeast Adriatic, they might try to gain popularity by resisting us, while, if they agreed, their word would have no value.

In any case the background of the political intrigues and disputes had now changed. The Italian Government were pledged not to reopen the constitutional question until the liberation of the whole country; they had decided, shortly after taking office, upon the summoning of a Constituent Assembly to settle the question. The Foreign Office, however, having in mind the communist success in Yugoslavia, and attempts to get control in Greece, thought that the real issue was now not between a monarchy and a republic but, as elsewhere in

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XI, section (ii).

Europe, between a parliamentary democracy and a communist dictatorship. The fighting in Italy was lasting longer than had been expected, and the dislocation of economic life was becoming increasingly serious. The Communists would certainly try to turn against the government popular discontent at the inevitable unemployment and privations throughout the liberated areas of the country during the winter. Hence the most urgent problem was the provision of economic assistance, which would weaken the communist appeal in Italy, as elsewhere. Economic assistance, or the greater part of it, would have to come from American sources, but the Americans did not seem to be fully aware that the danger-point was now more economic than political. The President and the State Department believed that the British Government should offer more political concessions, and that they were refusing these concessions for their own imperialist reasons.

The Prime Minister paid a short visit to Rome from August 21 to 23. After seeing Signor Bonomi, he was more inclined to support his government, but did not change his opinion about the undesirability of negotiating a preliminary peace with Italy. He considered that we might give more administrative authority to the Italians, and drop the word 'control' from the title of the Allied Control Commission, and that we should provide more economic assistance. The Prime Minister agreed at Quebec with the President on the text of a declaration announcing in general terms these political and economic concessions. The President—for electoral reasons in the United States—wanted to make the announcement at once, but the Foreign Office asked for delay because they wished to take out of the draft a paragraph containing an offer to revise the 'long armistice terms.' We did not want to give the Italians an opportunity to raise questions, e.g. about the surrender of the colonies. In any case we could not make an offer of this kind without consulting the Soviet Government and the Dominion Governments. The time was also unfavourable—from the point of view of British opinion—for the announcement of concessions; the lynching of an Italian<sup>1</sup> in Rome had been commented on severely in the British press, and there was much criticism of the inability of the Italian Government even to control trials in its courts. The President, however, insisted upon the issue of the statement at once, and the Prime Minister agreed to an announcement on September 26.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The victim was the former governor of a Roman prison who was a witness at the trial of one Caruso, a former Chief of Police, for executions and other offences committed in collaboration with the Germans. A mob which broke into the Palace of Justice with the intention of lynching Caruso failed to find him; they then seized and killed the ex-prison governor.

<sup>2</sup> On October 24 the Prime Minister suggested to the President the issue of a statement by the two Governments that the 600,000 Italian soldiers interned in Germany were entitled to be treated as prisoners of war, and that measures would be taken later against any persons responsible for maltreating them. The President accepted this proposal.

The Anglo-American declaration strengthened Signor Bonomi's position at a time when he was in some danger of being forced to resign owing to the pressure of extremist opinion. In mid-November, however, another crisis broke out when Signor Bonomi proposed to make some changes in his Cabinet. The questions at issue were primarily between him and the left-wing Ministers, but Count Sforza took advantage of the crisis to intrigue for the Deputy Prime Ministership or at least the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill, on hearing of these manoeuvres, asked the Foreign Office to telegraph at once to Sir N. Charles to oppose Count Sforza's appointment. The Foreign Office instructed Sir N. Charles that we had confidence in Signor Bonomi, and did not object to the changes of personnel which he proposed to make; our main concern was to keep Count Sforza out of the Cabinet. Sir N. Charles was told to let Mr. Kirk, the United States Ambassador, know of his discussions with Signor Bonomi, but not to say too much about our objections to Count Sforza. Lord Halifax was instructed at the same time to give our views to the United States Government, and also not to put too much emphasis on Count Sforza.

The fact of the British opposition to Count Sforza, however, became generally known in Rome, and—with the encouragement of Count Sforza himself—the left-wing parties protested on patriotic grounds against British interference with Italian freedom of choice. The State Department was now annoyed that we had not told them earlier of our opposition to Count Sforza, and were afraid that we should 'build him up' as a martyr. On December 1 Mr. Eden made a statement in the House of Commons on British policy towards Italy.<sup>2</sup> He pointed out that we had been at war with Italy owing to Italian aggression; that Italy had surrendered unconditionally, and that although we now recognised her as a co-belligerent, she was not an Ally. We were therefore entitled to say what we thought about the appointment to office of any Italian statesman. We had not exercised a veto, but we could reasonably point out that the appointment of Count Sforza as Foreign Minister would cause difficulties in Anglo-Italian relations. Count Sforza had not kept the promises which he had made to us on returning to Italy, and had worked against the governments of Marshal Badoglio and Signor Bonomi.

The State Department continued to regard objection to Count Sforza as an unjustified interference in a domestic political crisis in Italy. The Prime Minister had sent a message to Lord Halifax on the night of December 3-4—asking him, if necessary, to repeat the message to the President—that we were not exercising a veto,

<sup>1</sup> Count Sforza had been nominated Ambassador to Washington, but was refusing to allow the news of his appointment to be published.

<sup>2</sup> *Parl Deb.*, 5th Ser., H. of C. Vol. 406, cols. 305-8.



but that since we did not trust Count Sforza, the Italian Government would be ill-advised to make difficulties on such a matter with one of the two Great Powers to whom Italy had surrendered unconditionally and whose armies were still operating on a large scale in the country. We were entitled to let the Italian Government know our views since we had been given the command in the Mediterranean, and therefore had a special position and responsibility. Mr. Churchill had taken great trouble to put before the President at Quebec a number of proposals for easing the situation in Italy—before the American Presidential election—and we expected consideration for our views from the State Department.

On December 5, however, Mr. Stettinius issued a statement<sup>1</sup> in which he attacked, almost directly, British policy in Italy and in Greece. He said that the composition of the Italian Government was purely an Italian affair except in the case of appointments where important military factors were concerned. Since Italy was an area of combined responsibility, the United States Government had reaffirmed both to the British and to the Italian Governments that they expected the Italians 'to work out their problems of government on democratic lines without interference from outside.'

Mr. Wright, in carrying out, while Lord Halifax was in New York, the instructions from Mr. Eden to protest strongly against Mr. Stettinius' statement, pointed out that we had not vetoed Count Sforza's appointment, and that in speaking plainly to the Italian Government about it we had done much less than the United States had done repeatedly in the case of personalities in the Argentine.<sup>2</sup> In the latter case, and in other cases, for example, recent negotiations with Sweden,<sup>3</sup> the United States Government had taken unilateral decisions or action without consulting us. We had complained in private, but in public we had loyally avoided any appearance of a rift in Allied unity.

The President replied on December 6 to a protest from the Prime Minister that he deplored any offence which the statement on Italy had given to Mr. Churchill personally, but that Mr. Eden's statement in the House of Commons had put the United States Government in a difficult position; they regarded the British action as contrary to the policy—accepted at the Moscow Conference—of allowing the Italians to work out their own solutions.

On December 7 Lord Halifax telegraphed that the State Depart-

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 358-9.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter XXIII.

<sup>3</sup> These negotiations were about cutting off trade between Sweden and Germany. The State Department had taken action in November, 1944, contrary to British proposals to them and without consulting or even informing the Foreign Office. At the request of the Ministry of Economic Warfare, Lord Halifax had been instructed to protest against this unilateral action. See Medlicott, II, 496-7.

ment had evidently drafted their statement in order to meet internal criticism; their intention had not been unfriendly, and they agreed with the British view of Count Sforza, though they were unwilling to object to Italian personalities unless they were fascist or their appointment was likely to endanger military operations. In fact Signor Bonomi formed a new government; Count Sforza was not in the Cabinet, and the British and United States Governments issued statements on December 14 announcing they had agreed upon the representative character of the new government, and were glad to see it in office.<sup>1</sup>

## (ii)

*Further Anglo-American differences with regard to Italy: British proposals for a peace treaty with Italy: the President's letter to the Prime Minister at the Yalta Conference and the Prime Minister's reply: Foreign Office views on an Italian peace treaty.*

In spite of the announcement of December 14, 1944, the United States and British Governments still took different views about Italian demands for very large concessions. The reasons for this difference of attitude remained unchanged. The Americans had not been attacked by Italy; skilfully directed Italian-American propaganda encouraged public opinion in the United States to take the line that the Italian people should not be held responsible for the acts of the fascist régime. The President and the Administration could not ignore this *bloc* of opinion; Mr. Roosevelt indeed was more forthcoming to the Italians than to the French, and the State Department seemed as suspicious as ever of British imperialism and of the conservative ideas of the Prime Minister. In any case the Americans wanted

<sup>1</sup> One indirect consequence of the Italian Cabinet crisis was a report that Count Sforza, as High Commissioner dealing with the punishment of fascists, was intending to order the arrest of Marshal Badoglio. Sir N. Charles telegraphed on December 4 that Marshal Badoglio believed this report, and that, with the agreement of the United States Ambassador, he (Sir N. Charles) had warned Signor Bonomi that Marshal Badoglio's arrest would have very serious consequences. On December 7 Marshal Badoglio himself called at the British Embassy to say that he was likely to be arrested later in the day. Sir N. Charles persuaded Signor Bonomi to tell the Purge Commission not to make the arrest. Since Signor Bonomi at this time had not formed his new government, Sir N. Charles thought that the Purge Commission might disregard his instructions. Marshal Badoglio asked whether he could stay in the British Embassy. Sir N. Charles let him stay for one night on the pretext that he was unwell. At the Prime Minister's instructions Lord Halifax asked whether the State Department agreed with the British view that the Italian Government must be told, on military grounds, not to arrest Marshal Badoglio. For a few days Marshal Badoglio continued to regard himself in danger, and would not go to his home. Sir N. Charles thought that it might be better for him to leave Italy, but he finally accepted assurances from Count Sforza that he would not be arrested.

to 'liquidate' as soon as possible the whole situation arising from the war in Europe.

The public statements made by leading Americans encouraged the Italians to feel aggrieved at what they took to be British opposition to the more lenient treatment which the Americans seemed prepared to give them. Thus Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Hopkins went to Allied Headquarters in Italy on January 30 and 31, 1945, as guests of General Clark. Mr. Hopkins spent the previous two days in Rome. He did not see any British officials, and his views on the Italian situation were known to the British authorities only through reports of his statements at a press conference which he gave solely to American press correspondents. According to these reports Mr. Hopkins said to the correspondents that American public opinion would not allow the peoples of the 'liberated' countries (Mr. Hopkins used this term to include Italy) to suffer from cold, hunger and other privations. He also appeared to admit a change of mind on the question of postponing important Italian political problems until after the war.<sup>1</sup>

The Italians themselves made a direct appeal to the three Powers at the Yalta Conference. They asked for Allied status, and for more economic and financial help. The Foreign Office telegraphed to Mr. Eden on February 9 their hope that we should promise nothing more to the Italians. An announcement that we were about to give more assistance to Italy would be badly received in France unless the Conference went a long way to meet French claims with regard to Germany. It would also be badly received in the liberated Allied countries unless we could say that adequate arrangements had been made to meet the requirements of those countries for their civil imports programme.<sup>2</sup>

The Italian question was not officially brought before the Yalta Conference but was discussed in general terms by the British and United States Delegations both at Malta and Yalta. At Malta, in reply to an American suggestion that we did not want to go as far as the United States in helping to rebuild Italy, Sir A. Cadogan said that we were fully aware of the need to do so, but that the Italians should not be given better treatment than our liberated Allies. At the end of the Conference the President left with the Prime Minister a letter referring to this conversation, and stating that, while there were certain differences of emphasis between the British and American views, there was no 'basic reason' for disagreement over Italy, and

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office thought that Mr. Eden might have a chance at the Yalta Conference of pointing out to Mr. Hopkins that some of the difficulties about Allied economic policy towards Italy came from the failure of the United States Government to appoint an American official to the headship of the economic section in the Allied Commission. This post had been vacant for several months, though we had been asking the Americans to make the appointment.

<sup>2</sup> There was at this time a considerable sense of exasperation in the Foreign Office over the Italian complaints.

that some constructive steps should be taken to move away from the 'onerous and obsolete' surrender terms which no longer suited the situation.

Mr. Eden thought that the words of the letter were 'put in the President's mouth by the State Department members of the American delegation,'<sup>1</sup> and that it would be better not to take up the subject in detail with Mr. Roosevelt before consulting the Foreign Office. The Prime Minister therefore sent only a short acknowledgment in which he promised to consider the letter on his return to London.<sup>2</sup>

The Foreign Office thought that the President's letter really meant making a preliminary peace treaty with Italy. At the end of December, 1944, Lord Halifax had reported that the State Department was suggesting that the Instrument of Surrender should be replaced by negotiated agreements with the Italian Government. These agreements would reserve questions such as frontiers for later decision at the Peace Conference. The Foreign Office had disagreed with this plan. Our earlier proposals for a preliminary treaty would have included the more severe conditions as well as concessions, and there was no advantage in the American plan especially when we were already considering practical measures for implementing the joint statement of September 26, 1944. The Foreign Office suggested, however, telling the Italian Government that as soon as the war with Germany was over, we should be willing to make peace with Italy, i.e. before we negotiated any peace with Germany. The Prime Minister had agreed with this suggestion.<sup>3</sup> Lord Halifax was instructed accordingly on January 17, 1945. The State Department had then said no more about a preliminary treaty, and had not replied to the Foreign Office suggestion.

On April 10 therefore Lord Halifax was given a letter in general terms from the Prime Minister to the President, and Lord Halifax was instructed to remind the State Department of our proposal to give priority to an Italian treaty after the defeat of Germany. We

<sup>1</sup> This view seems to have been correct.

<sup>2</sup> On February 24 Mr. Macmillan, as Acting President of the Allied Commission (the Supreme Allied Commander in Italy retained the Presidency but delegated his functions in permanence to the Acting President), had made a speech on the detailed directive to the Supreme Commander which was to implement the promises in the Anglo-American declaration of September 26. The directive had been delayed partly owing to Anglo-American differences of view, and partly because it dealt with a large number of very complicated questions covering almost the whole field of political, economic, and administrative relations between the Allies and the Italian Government. I have not dealt here with the discussions about the directive. The directive contained—at British insistence—a statement that any new Italian government would be requested to confirm their adherence to the terms of surrender undertaken by their predecessors. For details see C. R. S. Harris, *Allied Military Administration of Italy 1943-5* (British Official History of the Second World War).

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Churchill had commented: 'The United States have lesser rights in this matter than we, who were attacked by Italy, and had to fight them for two years before the United States intervened at all. There is the question of the Italian fleet which the President promised should be divided in thirds without consulting us.'

were preparing a draft of the terms which we should wish to include in a treaty, and intended to submit this draft, after consultation with the Dominions, to the United States Government and to enquire the views of other Allied Governments. This procedure would be slow. If the Americans insisted on their plan of negotiated agreements, we would accept it only on condition that it did not postpone for future settlement questions relating to frontiers, colonies, etc.

The final offensive in Italy had opened on the day before these instructions were sent to Lord Halifax. On April 29 hostilities in Italy came to an end.<sup>1</sup> Hence there were obvious reasons for reaching agreement with the United States about a treaty. Mr. Eden drew up a memorandum on the subject in the latter part of May, but did not submit it in a final form to the War Cabinet until early in July. Meanwhile the Foreign Office, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, was strongly against giving way to Marshal Tito's claims to Trieste and the whole of Istria.

The memorandum on the terms of a peace treaty with Italy assumed that we wanted the restoration of a democratic Italy, economically prosperous, and on friendly relations with us. On the other hand we had a right to ask Italy to make reparation for her aggression. She would have to recognise the independence of Ethiopia and Albania. The Dodecanese (with the exception of Castellorizo which should go to Turkey) should be given to Greece, and Zara and the islands off the Dalmatian coast to Yugoslavia. The islands of Pantelaria, Lampedusa and Linosa might be administered by Italy under international supervision. We might support French demands for minor frontier claims in the neighbourhood of Briançon and Ventimiglia, but not in the Val d'Aosta. The province of Trento in the south Tyrol should remain Italian. The case of the province of Bolzano was more difficult; we might find what view the Americans took about it. We could not support the extreme Yugoslav claims which would deprive Italy of Trieste and the predominantly Italian areas in Gorizia and at the mouth of the Isonzo. The Italian colonies had been the product of strategic calculation and Italian pretensions to be a Great Power. The restoration of Italian rule in any of these colonial territories would be unpopular with the inhabitants; we did not want the Italians back on the Red Sea. The colonies were an economic liability to Italy, and their loss would not damage her economically. The best plan would probably be to place them under trusteeship, with the Italians themselves as trustees in Tripolitania.<sup>2</sup>

With the expulsion of the Germans from the whole of Italy, the

<sup>1</sup> The Germans signed on this date an Instrument of Unconditional Surrender in Italy.

<sup>2</sup> This memorandum assumed, and a later paper drawn up for the British delegation to the Potsdam Conference stated explicitly that we did not want to annex any of the Italian colonies, and indeed could not do so without breaking the Atlantic Charter.

question of summoning a Constituent Assembly became of immediate importance. On May 3 Signor Bonomi proposed that the Allies themselves might stipulate, in the Peace Treaty, that the 'institutional question' should be decided by a plebiscite. The Foreign Office thought that Signor Bonomi might be right in thinking that a plebiscite would result in a majority for a monarchy, whereas elections to a Constituent Assembly, and a vote in the Assembly, would probably favour the Communists who were both the best organised and the most unscrupulous of the parties. On the other hand neither the Americans nor the Russians would be likely to agree to any Allied 'order' on the subject. In any case the real issues—parliamentary democracy or a totalitarian State—could not be expressed in a plebiscite vote.

The question put by Signor Bonomi turned out not to matter because he resigned shortly afterwards and was succeeded by an Administration under Signor Parri.<sup>1</sup> On June 26 this new Government announced that they would summon a Constituent Assembly as soon as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Signor Parri had been a prominent anti-fascist and leader in the Resistance Movement. The reconstruction of Signor Bonomi's Government had been expected after the expulsion of the Germans from North Italy. The new government was a coalition of the six main parties, but a majority of the Ministers came from the North.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Great Britain, the United States, and Argentina, 1943-4

#### (i)

*British acceptance of American leadership in policy towards the Latin American States: the attitude of the Argentine Government in 1942-3.*

THE area of Anglo-American differences on policy—though small in relation to the wide extent of friendly agreement and cooperation—was increased in 1943-4 owing to the unwillingness of the Foreign Office to follow Mr. Hull in what seemed, on the British view, an unwise interference in the domestic affairs of Argentina. Before and after the entry of the United States into the war British policy towards the Latin American States followed the lead set by the State Department. Any attempt at separate British action would have caused resentment both in Washington and throughout Latin America, and was, in fact, unnecessary because the decisions taken at Pan-American meetings were favourable to British interests. The Latin American States generally were disinclined to support Germany, and resented (not without a certain anxiety) the strident efforts made by the Germans to organise as a distinct body the large populations of German descent in parts of South America. On the other hand after the collapse of France, when Latin American opinion expected a British defeat, the countries outside the area of immediate protection by the United States did not want to risk the enmity of Germany by undertaking any positive action against the Axis Powers. They agreed, however, at the Havana Conference of July, 1940, to a declaration of common interest that 'any attempt on the part of a non-American State against the integrity or inviolability of the territory, the sovereignty, or the political independence of an American State' should be considered as an act of aggression against all the States signing the declaration.

The United States Government called a meeting of the Latin American States at Rio de Janeiro on January 15, 1942, for the implementation of this declaration of July, 1940. Before the meeting took place the Latin American countries near to the United States had declared war on the Axis Powers or at least broken off diplomatic relations with them. The United States Government did not regard the belligerency of all Latin America as necessary or even desirable, but they wanted every State to break off diplomatic and commercial



relations with the common enemy if only to put a stop to espionage and the organisation of 'fifth column' activity.

The opposition to this policy came mainly from Argentina, and was due partly to nationalist dislike of dictation by the United States, and partly to the belief that Germany would win the war. On December 31, 1942, at the request of the United States Government, the British Government issued through the Foreign Office a public statement regretting that Argentina had not broken off relations with the Axis, and pointing out that trade with her would no longer be possible unless steps were taken to prevent German agents from giving information to submarines about the movement of British shipping. The Argentine Government took some measures—including the deportation of the German naval attaché—to stop these activities, but in February, 1943, reaffirmed their neutrality.

In June, 1943, the dictatorship of President Castillo was overthrown by a military *coup*. The British and United States Governments hoped that there would now be a change of foreign policy, but the new government made it clear that they intended to delay a break with the Axis as long as possible, and meanwhile to bargain for American economic and military aid. At the end of the year there was evidence of the complicity of the Argentine Government and German agents in a military revolution overthrowing the Bolivian Government.

At this point Mr. Hull proposed to take strong action to discredit the Argentine military dictatorship and to secure the establishment of a more democratic and cooperative régime. He asked for British support, and for the next twelve months this question caused much controversy between the Foreign Office and the State Department. The Foreign Office agreed with Mr. Hull about the character of the dictatorship; British economic interests in Argentina were greater than those of the United States, and the threat to such long-term interests from adventurers like Colonel Perón—who soon became the dominant figure in the régime—were serious. The Foreign Office, however, thought that Mr. Hull was greatly exaggerating the damage done by the Argentine Government to the Allies, and that anyhow his attempt to bring about the overthrow of the régime would fail. Opinion generally in the Argentine regarded the public indictment of the government by foreigners as an insult; the effect of these attacks were merely to strengthen Perón's position. The Foreign Office argued again and again that official gestures of disapproval, such as the withdrawal of Ambassadors, were ineffective and that an attempt to apply economic sanctions would do more harm to the Allies than to the Argentine Government. Mr. Hull suspected that the British attitude was due to the pressure of financial interests, but the Foreign Office pointed out the inescapable facts that the stoppage of supplies of meat, corn, and hides from Argentina would greatly

hamper military operations in 1944, and was of general concern to the United Nations. The Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed with this view; Mr. Hull refused to accept it or to regard Argentina as likely to hold out against Allied action.

Early in 1944 the Argentine Government, realising that a German victory was less likely, became somewhat disquieted at the possible results of their own isolation in comparison with the position of Brazil. They decided to comply with American demands to the extent of breaking off relations with Germany and Japan. Mr. Hull then agreed to postpone further action and to give the Government a chance of carrying out measures against German activities. The breach of relations took place on January 26, 1944, but the Government did nothing to suppress Axis activities.

(ii)

*Coup d'état of February, 1944, in Argentina: Mr. Hull's refusal to recognise the new government: differences between Mr. Hull and the Foreign Office over the treatment of the government: the question of British meat contracts: change in American policy and recognition of the Argentine Government.*

Mr. Hull's impatience with the behaviour of the Argentine Government was not lessened by another turn in the domestic politics of the country. In February, 1944, a group of officers headed by Colonel Perón deposed the President of Argentina, and installed a new President—General Farrell—while keeping real power in their own hands. The United States Government refused to recognise the legality of this latest government unless they met the American requirements.

Perón and Farrell would not give way to American pressure. Mr. Hull became even more indignant, and more convinced about the need to get rid of the régime, while the Foreign Office held to their view that denunciation merely strengthened the position of the dictators, and that we should be wiser to limit ourselves to saying that we counted upon the new government loyally to carry out the policy of cooperation with the United Nations begun by their predecessors. We should thereby be putting on Farrell and Perón the responsibility for action contrary to our interests. In view of Mr. Hull's insistence, however, Mr. Eden instructed the British Ambassador, Sir D. Kelly, to limit his communications with the Argentine Government to matters of routine.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister was especially anxious to go as far as possible in supporting Mr. Hull. In a minute of February 27 to Mr. Eden he wrote: 'When you consider the formidable questions on which we may have difficulty with the United States, oil, dollar balances, shipping, policy to France, Italy, Spain, the Balkans, etc., I feel that we ought to try to make them feel we are their friends and helpers in the American sphere.'

The deadlock was unbroken at the end of May. Meanwhile, under Perón's impulsion, the Argentine Government continued to reorganise the country on totalitarian lines. With the full agreement of the United States Ambassador (who had consulted the State Department) Sir D. Kelly had a private discussion with President Farrell on the question of recognition. The President complained that the attitude of the United States was greatly resented by the Argentine people, and that the 'public orders' given to him by the State Department made it impossible for him to carry out conciliatory measures.

The Secretary of State instructed Lord Halifax on June 3 to tell Mr. Hull that in our view it would be wiser to give up the idea of a 'diplomatic victory' over the Argentine Government and to concentrate on finding a practical solution by laying down clear and definite terms of recognition. At the suggestion of a senior official of the State Department, who was intending to submit a memorandum to Mr. Hull, Lord Halifax waited before carrying out his instructions. On June 16, however, he telegraphed that he had heard in confidence from the State Department that the United States Ambassador might be withdrawn from Buenos Aires, and that the United States Government might ask us to withdraw Sir D. Kelly.

Mr. Eden therefore instructed Lord Halifax not to delay any longer his representations to Mr. Hull. If Mr. Hull raised the question of the withdrawal of the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax should say 'forcibly' that we would not agree to withdrawal unless the Argentine Government committed an unfriendly act of a kind which in normal circumstances would justify a rupture of diplomatic relations.<sup>2</sup> On the night of June 23-4 Lord Halifax reported that Mr. Hull had told him that he was withdrawing the United States Ambassador, and hoped that we would recall Sir D. Kelly. Lord Halifax asked whether it would not be a good thing to tell the Argentine Government what we wanted of them, with the implication that we would recognise them if they met our wishes. Mr. Hull did not agree. He said that the Argentine Government already knew what we wanted, and that they were trying to break South American solidarity and to hold on to their German connexions.

The Prime Minister was inclined to give way to Mr. Hull. He wrote to Mr. Eden again that we had 'so many differences open with the State Department at this moment that this might be an oppor-

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hull described Argentina as a 'deserter.' The Foreign Office pointed out there was an analogy between the position of Argentina in regard to the Pan-American Union, and that of Eire in regard to the Commonwealth from which she obtained protection and many other advantages. The British Government, however, had decided to leave moral judgments in the matter to be applied by others, and not to upbraid Mr. De Valera or put pressure on him, but, far from 'appeasing' him, to ensure that Eire, and, if possible, its government, made the maximum contribution to the war effort.

tunity to do them a service.' Mr. Eden replied on June 26 that Mr. Hull's motives were not 'founded on good policy,' but on irritation over his previous failure and over attacks on his policy by Mr. Sumner Welles. He also seemed to think that 'being tough with neutrals' would help towards winning the presidential election. Our constant support of Mr. Hull and his policy had not earned us much thanks, but was 'landing us into ever deeper trouble.' Mr. Hull had not consulted us before recalling the United States Ambassador, and in these circumstances we had to consider our interests. 'First and foremost' was the question of meat supply. Our contract with the Argentine Government was due for renewal at the end of August. It was most important that the matter should be handled by our Ambassador, and that the political atmosphere should be as little unfavourable as possible. We also had very large capital interests in Argentina which were already threatened and we were handicapped in protecting them because we were not officially in relations with the government. In any case the withdrawal of an Ambassador was 'about the most futile diplomatic move' which could be taken.

On June 28 Lord Halifax telegraphed that a senior official in the State Department said to him privately that he was greatly disturbed at Mr. Hull's policy towards Argentina, and that we should do the United States a valuable service by refusing to be rushed into a critical decision. President Roosevelt, however, telegraphed to Mr. Churchill on June 30 asking that we should recall Sir D. Kelly for consultation. After a discussion with Mr. Eden, the Prime Minister replied that he would agree to the recall, but that he was acting only in response to the President's request. He did not see what we expected to get from this policy. He added: 'I hope you will not mind my saying, as is my duty, that we ourselves were placed in an invidious position by the American decision, to which we are now asked to conform, being taken without consultation with us.'

The President sent on July 6 a telegram of thanks in which he said that, if we continued to stand firm, there was a good chance that the entire matter would soon be cleared up. The Foreign Office thought this view 'absurdly optimistic,' since an Argentine government which gave way to pressure from the United States would at once be overthrown. Sir D. Kelly did not consider that the Axis war effort was getting any real assistance from Argentina. He also believed that this was the view of the United States naval and military authorities. We ought therefore to decide upon what we regarded as reasonable terms of recognition, and put these terms to the State Department.

The Ministry of Food, with Mr. Eden's approval, drew up a note on the serious consequences which would follow a failure to get a renewal of the meat contract. The Prime Minister sent this note to the President on July 14 with a covering message that we wanted to

do all we could to help him and Mr. Hull with the South American countries, but that he ought to see the 'formidable arguments' put forward by the Minister of Food. We were importing over 40 *per cent* of our meat ration from the Argentine, and could not risk losing this source of supply. Mr. Churchill wrote: 'The stamina of the workman cannot be maintained on a lesser diet in meat. You would not send your soldiers into battle on the British Service meat ration, which is far above what is given to workmen. Your people are eating per head more meat and more poultry than before the war while ours are most sharply cut.'

The President replied on July 23 that he would do nothing to cut down the British meat supply or to prevent a new contract. He thought, however, that we could state firmly our disapproval of the pro-Axis sentiments and practises of the Argentine Government, and, at the same time, get our meat contract. He also asked the Prime Minister to consider a statement by Mr. Hull which was being sent through Mr. Winant to Mr. Eden.

On July 27 Mr. Hull issued to the press a public indictment of Argentina. The Foreign Office considered that the charges were put more strongly than the facts warranted, and that Mr. Hull had again shewn great lack of consideration in issuing this statement without allowing us time to discuss it with him or with Sir D. Kelly. We could not now send Sir D. Kelly back or recognise the Argentine Government at least for some time, though we might try in some private way to make them behave better and also 'to lower the temperature all round.' We could not back Mr. Hull very strongly because his facts and methods were wrong.

At Mr. Eden's suggestion, the Prime Minister on August 2, in a review of the war situation, referred to the attitude of the Argentine Government.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office thought that Argentina had done much of what we required of her, though so slowly and grudgingly that she deserved no credit. They suggested that the Combined Chiefs of Staff should be asked to state what injury Argentina had caused to the United Nations and what assistance she could now provide. We should not send our Ambassador back, or recognise the Argentine Government until we had discussed the situation with the United States. Mr. Churchill, in a message of August 23 to Mr. Roosevelt, hoped that the United States, having said in public what they thought of the Argentine Government, would now 'ignore them for a good many weeks, thus giving both of us an opportunity to examine a common policy, and the Argentines a chance to mend

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister's words were: 'We must all feel deep regret that in this testing-time for nations, she [Argentina] has not seen fit to declare herself wholeheartedly, unmistakably, and with no reserve or qualification whatsoever, on the side of freedom, godliness and decent humanity.'

their ways, which they can never do under the glare of public indictment.'

Here, on the British side, the matter rested, as far as the political issue was concerned, until Mr. Hull's resignation. Mr. Stettinius then met the wishes of the other Latin American States by taking a more conciliatory line. Before the end of the year a private agreement was made with the Argentine leaders on the question of recognition. On April 9, 1945, the Argentine Government, which had declared war on Germany on March 27, was officially recognised by the United States Government.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, in the last few months of 1944, there were further differences with the State Department over the question of a British meat contract. The British Government had taken the President's telegram of July 23 to mean that there were no American objections to the negotiation of a new meat contract. The Prime Minister had in fact telegraphed on August 23 to the President that we were going ahead with the negotiations and hoped that nothing would happen to hazard them.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Roosevelt had replied on August 26 that he had no doubt that a satisfactory contract would be arranged. The Ministry of Food therefore asked the Argentine negotiators in London to find out whether their Government would be interested in a four-year contract.

At the Quebec Conference, however, the Americans asked us not to conclude a contract even for two years. Mr. Hull spoke contemptuously of the 'petty commercial advantages of a long-term bargain with a fascist government,' but the reasons on the British side for wanting the contract were unchanged. If we lost the Argentine supplies altogether, our small meat ration would be reduced by some two-thirds. If we refused a contract, the Argentine Government would not be embarrassed—as Mr. Hull argued—because other purchasers would come in. The Belgian, Dutch, and French Governments (who had gold at their disposal) were anxious to buy, and prices would therefore be raised. We could not hold off these Governments indefinitely; we had told them of our intention to purchase the whole supply on a long-term basis, and to allocate shares to the liberated European countries.

The Foreign Office considered that Mr. Hull, since he knew these facts, had no right to put pressure on us. On the other hand we could not forget the great debt which we owed him for his support.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also below, p. 532, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> The United States Government had frozen Argentine gold assets in the United States on August 16, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> One Foreign Office comment at this time was that dealing with Mr. Hull was like attempting to deal with Mr. Gladstone in his old age.

The Prime Minister, as before, thought that we ought to do our utmost to fall in with American wishes. He suggested to the War Cabinet on October 4 that we should state the whole case again to Mr. Hull, and say that we would delay signing the contract until after the American elections, but Mr. Roosevelt telegraphed that he hoped we should continue only on a month-to-month basis and not conclude a long-term contract. The Prime Minister replied on October 13 that he had given instructions that no long-term contract should be negotiated during the next two months.<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Food, however, before they knew of these instructions, had already discussed with the Argentine representatives the reply of their Government to the proposal made to them in August. The Ministry now held up further discussion; since there was a serious risk that a refusal to do so would endanger the success of the large economic and financial negotiations with the United States, they finally agreed to continue for another half year on a month-to-month basis.

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister was in Moscow at this time.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### British relations with China from 1941 to the end of the war

*The background of Anglo-Chinese relations in 1941-2: General Chiang Kai-shek's support of the Indian Congress Party.*

**D**URING the year before the entry of the United States into the war the British Government remained unable to give much help to China. The Chinese indeed were doing very little to help themselves. They had little contact with the Japanese armies, and took no organised offensive action against them. American observers reported at the end of the year that the demands for more war material were being made not for use against Japan but to secure the Chinese Government against insurrection after Allied pressure had forced the Japanese out of China. Although General Chiang Kai-shek himself retained wide personal support, the incompetence and corruption of the Chinese Government had lost it all disinterested loyalty. There seemed no chance of improvement during the war. A British mission sent in September, 1941, to advise on the economic and financial situation reported that Ministers and officials could not cope with problems of reform, and that British and American financial aid had no lasting results. The United States Military Mission sent to China in August, 1941, was equally pessimistic about the army; American experts who reported on the inefficiency with which the Chinese were handling traffic on the Burma Road found their recommendations largely ignored.

The Chinese were hoping, obviously, that Great Britain and the United States would be involved in war with Japan, but the immediate consequences were more than disappointing. For a time at least the military position became worse, and the prospects of relief were more distant owing to the known Anglo-American intention of concentrating on the defeat of Germany before the defeat of Japan. The background of Anglo-Chinese relations during 1942 was, in fact, a long series of Allied discussions over strategy in the Far East. These difficult problems of priorities, especially in the allocation of supplies, the decision on the areas to be chosen for the grand attack against Japan, and the choice of military commanders for this attack were outside the business of the Foreign Office.

The Foreign Office, however, was concerned on the political side with trying to meet General Chiang Kai-shek's many complaints and

suspensions of British policy, and of explaining why it was not possible to satisfy his many demands. Thus, after a special visit of General Wavell and Major-General Brett, of the United States Army, to Chungking on December 22, 1941, the Foreign Office had information that General Chiang Kai-shek had been much disappointed at the British refusal to discuss with him the general strategy of the war. General Chiang Kai-shek complained to President Roosevelt about British unwillingness to accept Chinese help. General Wavell telegraphed to the Prime Minister that the Chinese—and especially Mr. T. V. Soong in Washington—were not giving an accurate account of the facts, and the Prime Minister promised to give a correct version to the President. Even so, the Foreign Office thought that we ought to take General Chiang Kai-shek more into our confidence, though we had to be on our guard about military information because there were many Japanese spies in Chungking, and the Japanese were probably able to decipher Chinese code telegrams. We might also make more sympathetic public statements about the Chinese. We need not accept their own fantastic claims about their military activity—when they were doing little or nothing—but we might emphasize their refusal to accept defeat, and our intention to secure full Chinese independence at the end of the war. We knew that they had a genuine fear that, after the defeat of Germany, we might make a compromise peace with Japan at their expense.

The Foreign Office was hardly less concerned to prevent Far Eastern questions from bringing serious disharmony into Anglo-American relations. The British military view was that the diversion of resources on a large scale to China was not the best way to bring about the defeat of Japan. The Foreign Office also were not hopeful about the domestic prospects of General Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang after the war. They did not regard China as likely to be an effective Great Power in the near future; they also doubted whether—in the improbable event of a rapid recovery and unification—China would become a stabilising influence in Asia. The chances were rather that the aggressive nationalism of Japan would be succeeded by an equally aggressive nationalism on the part of the Chinese.

The American public—and the President—took a different view. They tended to regard the contribution which China could make to an Allied victory as hardly less than the contribution of the British Empire. They expected a quick Chinese recovery, and assumed a friendly cooperation between China and the western Powers, and especially the United States, in maintaining peace and stability in Asia. Hence they paid more attention to demands from General Chiang Kai-shek for a large share in Allied resources which, in the British view, could be better used elsewhere. They attributed

British opposition not to an impartial assessment of the facts, but to an attempt to 'write down' China in the interests of British imperialism.

General Chiang Kai-shek made matters difficult in 1942 owing to his efforts—which might in turn have had repercussions on Anglo-American relations—to interfere in the Indian political situation and even to suggest American-Chinese mediation. General Chiang Kai-shek proposed, towards the end of January, 1942, that he should pay a short unofficial visit to India and Burma, partly for military discussions, and partly to try to persuade Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Nehru to cooperate against Japan. The Government of India did not object to this visit, though there was a certain awkwardness about the proposal that the Head of the Chinese State should intervene between the Government of India and private individuals who had hitherto refused cooperation.

The War Cabinet suggested that the Viceroy should invite Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Nehru, and Mr. Jinnah to meet General Chiang Kai-shek. At first the General did not want them to come to Delhi. Mr. Churchill telegraphed a personal message to him before he left Chungking suggesting that a visit to Mr. Nehru and Mr. Gandhi, except by arrangements with the Viceroy, would be misunderstood in Great Britain and throughout the Empire. The Foreign Office, and the Viceroy, were more inclined to let General Chiang Kai-shek do as he wished, but he did not object to meeting Mr. Nehru in Delhi. Mr. Gandhi, after refusing to come to Delhi, decided to meet General Chiang Kai-shek on the latter's way home through Calcutta. General Chiang Kai-shek, however, failed to understand either the British plan for India or the seriousness of the Hindu-Moslem problem.<sup>1</sup> Chinese politicians cared little for the rights of minorities in China or elsewhere. They regarded the Indian Congress party as the 'natural' ally of the Kuomintang, and expected them to gain power, as the Kuomintang had done, by absorbing the State. Furthermore a 'Congress India' would be a convenient neighbour, not strong enough to interfere in Chinese affairs, or even to stop a certain amount of expansion by the Chinese themselves.

The Foreign Office tried to get an accurate statement of the facts of the Hindu-Moslem dispute to General Chiang Kai-shek, but he remained convinced that the responsibility for preventing a settlement lay entirely with the British Government. At the end of July, 1942, Mr. T. V. Soong told Sir R. I. Campbell (in Lord Halifax's absence) that he had given a message from General Chiang Kai-shek to Mr. Roosevelt suggesting that the United Nations (other than Great Britain) might 'underwrite' British promises to India, and thus

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese tended to equate Indians and Hindus, since the same Chinese term covered them.

make possible a compromise arrangement between the British Government and Congress for the period of the war.<sup>1</sup>

General Chiang Kai-shek also sent telegrams to Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Nehru, and Mr. Azad. He asked Sir H. Seymour to let the Viceroy know of these telegrams, and to request that a Chinese Commissioner should deliver them in person, and see Mr. Nehru, if possible alone. The Viceroy replied on August 14 that he could not allow the messages to be conveyed. He pointed out that the attitude of General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek<sup>2</sup> was already much resented in Moslem circles, and that Chinese interference in Indian domestic politics would be as intolerable as British attempts to interfere in the domestic politics of Chungking.

Mr. Eden instructed Sir H. Seymour to explain why an agreement between the Government of India and the Indian Congress would not solve the problem of India. The Congress had rejected Sir S. Cripps' proposals, which might have led to a settlement, and was now asking the British Government to allow British troops to be used as the mercenaries of a Hindu raj. In view of the stubbornness with which General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek held to their opinions, the Prime Minister sent to the General a personal message explaining why the British Government and the Government of India could not accept proposals for Chinese-American mediation.<sup>3</sup> This message pointed out the elementary facts about the very large number of Indians—including 95,000,000 Moslems and 45,000,000 'Untouchables'—not represented by Congress. Mr. Churchill said that it was a wise rule for Allies not to interfere in each other's domestic affairs. We respected the sovereign rights of China, and had abstained from comment even when the differences between the Kuomintang and the Communists were most acute. We therefore hoped that General Chiang Kai-shek would not be drawn into political correspondence with the Indian Congress or with individuals trying to paralyse the

<sup>1</sup> On August 11, 1942, General Chiang Kai-shek told Sir H. Seymour\* that the Indian leaders might go over to the Japanese if they could not count upon sympathy from the United Nations. He still thought Congress to be at the centre of the problem, and believed American mediation to be the only solution. General Chiang Kai-shek also sent messages to the President protesting against the internment of the Congress leaders. The President sent these messages to the Prime Minister. Mr. Churchill replied that the Government of India (there was at this time only one British member on the Viceroy's Council) were the best judges in the matter. Mr. Roosevelt telegraphed that he had already told General Chiang Kai-shek that he did not think it 'wise or expedient' to consider any of the steps which the General had proposed, but that he would be glad to keep in close touch with him 'with regard to this or any other questions which affect the vital interests of the United Nations.' Mr. Roosevelt said to the Prime Minister that he had given this answer because otherwise General Chiang Kai-shek might have acted on his own initiative. For the text of the President's message to Mr. Churchill, see Churchill, IV, 456.

\* Sir H. Seymour succeeded Sir A. Clark Kerr as Ambassador at Chungking in February, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> Madame Chiang Kai-shek had also sent messages.

<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister was in Egypt at this time, and sent the draft of his message for consideration by the Foreign Office and the India Office.

war effort of the Government of India and to disturb peace and order. Mr. Churchill said that no British Government of which he was head, or a member, could accept American mediation on a matter affecting British sovereign rights, and that Mr. Roosevelt would be unwilling to make any proposal for mediation. General Chiang Kai-shek told Sir H. Seymour on September 23 that he had received the Prime Minister's message. He said no more about the subject, and Sir H. Seymour hoped that he would leave it alone for the time.

(ii)

*Chinese request for a British loan: refusal of the British terms: the treaty of January 11, 1943, for the surrender of extra-territorial rights.*

Another serious difficulty with General Chiang Kai-shek arose out of a request by him in December, 1941, for a loan of £100,000,000 from Great Britain, and 500,000,000 dollars from the United States. The purpose of this loan was domestic and political, since the Chinese Government could not spend so large an amount on foreign purchases during the war. They were already receiving war material on Lend-Lease terms, and the possibilities of transport were limited. General Chiang Kai-shek admitted that he wanted the loan to support the Chinese currency, and to improve morale by showing that the British and Americans had confidence in the future of China.

The United States Government obtained the approval of Congress on February 2, 1942, for a loan of 500,000,000 dollars; the British Government could not offer more than £50,000,000. The terms of the American loan were unconditional; the British loan was for war purposes only, and in the sterling area, though £10,000,000 would be available for guaranteeing an internal war loan. In view of the British financial position, the British Government could not undertake any wider commitments involving a large expenditure of sterling by China after the war. Dr. Kung, the Chinese Finance Minister,<sup>1</sup> was unwilling to accept these terms.<sup>2</sup>

During the negotiations over a loan the Foreign Office had been considering whether to offer a treaty to China for the abrogation of

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office considered that Dr. Kung's administration of Chinese finances was as unfortunate for China as his influence upon his brother-in-law, General Chiang Kai-shek.

<sup>2</sup> The negotiations dragged on unsuccessfully throughout 1942; they were revived towards the end of 1943, and an agreement finally reached on May 2, 1944. The terms were those upon which the British Government had felt bound to insist throughout the negotiations.

British extra-territorial rights.<sup>1</sup> They decided in April, 1942, that it would be better not to make an offer of this kind until the military situation had improved. The State Department agreed with this view at the time, but early in September thought that there was no longer any reason for delay. The two Governments made a joint announcement of their intentions on October 9.<sup>2</sup> The British draft treaty was presented to the Chinese Government on October 30. The effect, however, was not as satisfactory as the Foreign Office had hoped. The Chinese accepted the surrender of privileges made to them. They asked also for the termination of the lease to the British Government of the Kowloon territory adjacent to Hong Kong.<sup>3</sup> They refused at first to accept a treaty which did not include a statement of British intention to surrender the territory. Finally they agreed not to raise the question in connexion with the treaty, though they reserved their right to bring it forward later.

The Anglo-Chinese treaty was signed on January 11, 1943.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese made the most of this legal acknowledgment of their changed relationship with the west, and of the American insistence on giving them the status of a Great Power. They no longer had any doubt whether they were on the winning side; the expulsion of the Japanese from China was now only a matter of time. General Chiang Kai-shek tried to get full practical recognition of this new equality. He put forward his claims with more vehemence in the hope of diverting attention from the domestic weakness of his Government. Under Dr. Kung's mismanagement the financial situation was entirely out of control; prices in 1943 were 200 times those of 1937. The provincial governors in the area under Kuomintang control were disregarding the central authority, though they were no less inefficient and corrupt. The Kuomintang army, which lived largely on the country, was almost as great a burden to the peasants as the Japanese. The leaders in Chungking had no intention of using this army against the Japanese; they were already diverting a large number of the better

<sup>1</sup> This question had been in abeyance since 1931. Negotiations had then been in progress since 1929 and, except for an article concerning certain reserved areas, the main features of a draft treaty had been agreed. The negotiations were discontinued after the Japanese aggression in Manchuria, since the Chinese Government were not likely to be able to implement a treaty. The Prime Minister stated in the House of Commons on July 18, 1940, that, when peace had been restored in the Far East, the British Government would be willing 'to negotiate . . . the abolition of extra-territorial rights, the rendition of concessions, and the revision of treaties on a basis of reciprocity and equality.' Mr. Eden reaffirmed this statement on June 11, 1941, and on July 4 sent a note to this effect to the Chinese Government.

<sup>2</sup> The announcement was made in China on October 10, the Chinese 'National Day' commemorating the military rising which was the first stage in the revolution of 1911.

<sup>3</sup> This territory had been leased for 99 years under an Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1898.

<sup>4</sup> The American-Chinese treaty was signed on the same day. The British treaty was ready for signature on January 1, but was held back owing to a delay in Washington over the Chinese text of the American treaty.

trained troops to ward off any further advance by the Communists in the north.

The Chinese demands were concerned for the most part with supplies and military plans, and were settled at discussions in which the Foreign Office took no direct part. The interest of the Foreign Office was indeed, as before, in preventing Chinese importunity from disturbing Anglo-American relations, and in trying to stop General Chiang Kai-shek (and, even more so, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, during her long stay in the United States) from misrepresenting the situation in India.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office were also disturbed at the large claims which General Chiang Kai-shek was putting forward for Chinese influence and territorial dominion after the war. They could not agree with President Roosevelt's view, in his conversations with Mr. Eden in March, 1943, that China had no aggressive or imperialistic ambitions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Madame Chiang Kai-shek addressed the United States Congress in February, 1943. She spoke strongly against the view that the defeat of Hitler was the first concern of the United States and Great Britain. Lord Halifax reported at the time that there was a risk of Congress being swept on a wave of public emotion into making promises to China which, in view of the shifting situation, it would be difficult to fulfil. At the end of April, 1943, Lord Halifax was instructed, at the request of the Viceroy of India, to protest to Mr. Soong about Madame Chiang Kai-shek's public criticism of British action in India, and to point out that we had taken the greatest care to avoid any public criticism of the deplorable dissensions in China between Communists and Nationalists which were preventing a united Chinese war effort.

<sup>2</sup> General Chiang Kai-shek's book, 'China's Destiny,' was first published in March, 1943. The publication in May, 1943, in Great Britain, the United States, and India of a translation of the book was postponed owing—according to reports—to fear of hostile foreign criticism. The main theme of the book was that the 'unequal treaties' imposed by foreign Powers had been responsible for the misfortunes of China during the last hundred years. In a revised edition, published in January, 1944, some of these denunciations of foreign action were toned down, and the Chinese were advised to 'abstain from raking up past things and harbouring old hatreds.'

A Foreign Office note (in February, 1944) on the book called attention to a criticism from a Chinese Communist writer pointing out that the 'unequal treaties were the result, and not the cause of Chinese rottenness.'

The Foreign Office also noted that General Chiang Kai-shek, notwithstanding his views about 'self-determination in Asia,' claimed that Tibet and Mongolia were necessary to China for her defence, and that 'no area' could 'of its own accord assume the form of independence.'

In July, 1943, the Chinese Ministry of Information published a map which included all northern Burma as undisputed Chinese territory. The Government of India were also concerned with the possibility of Chinese aggression against Tibet. The view of the British Government and of the Government of India was that the Chinese Government, while maintaining suzerainty over Tibet, had recognised the *de facto* autonomy of the country since the fall of the Manchu Empire. The Chinese Government denied any hostile intention but claimed that Tibet was Chinese territory and that the movement of Chinese troops on the border of the country was a domestic matter. The United States Government does not appear to have questioned this claim.



## (iii)

*The drift towards civil war in China: inability of the British Government to take steps towards bringing about an agreement between General Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communists.*

From the end of 1943 there were few diplomatic exchanges with the Chinese Government. The Americans had taken over practical responsibility for the relations between China and the Allies, and there was little for the British Government to do in the matter. The Foreign Office regarded with the deepest anxiety the increasing disintegration of the Kuomintang and the growing strength of the Communists. During and after the late summer of 1943 these communist demands went beyond the possibility of a compromise, even though they were still put in a polite form and, at least, nominally, with a view to the formation of a united government and military command. Negotiations between General Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists continued throughout 1944, without any agreement, and there seemed little chance of avoiding civil war after the expulsion of the Japanese.

The Secretary of State asked Sir H. Seymour in October, 1944, whether he thought it desirable for the British Government to try to establish direct contact with the Communists in an attempt to reconcile them with the Kuomintang.<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Seymour gave a pessimistic answer. He thought that the Kuomintang was altogether discredited, and regarded mainly as an organisation for distributing lucrative posts. The military command was 'childishly incompetent,' and the high fighting value of the Chinese soldiers merely wasted. The Communists knew the strength of their position and would not make any vital surrender to the Government. Sir H. Seymour did not think that we could do anything to promote an agreement. We had told General Chiang Kai-shek at the time of his intervention in Indian affairs that we did not interfere in the internal affairs of China. The Americans were trying to bring about a *modus vivendi*, though the chances were not good.<sup>2</sup>

The Foreign Office also saw no opportunity for British mediation. They wanted closer Anglo-American cooperation in China, but realised that American opinion generally—including official opinion

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office also wanted to get more information about the Communists. They received a number of reports from unofficial British sympathisers with the Communists, but these reports were superficial and in general unsatisfactory.

<sup>2</sup> In June, 1944, the President sent Mr. Henry Wallace, who was then Vice-President, to discuss with General Chiang Kai-shek the possibility of an agreement with the Communists, and also of a Chinese-Russian agreement which would secure the Chinese Government from Russian support of the Communists. In August the President sent two more personal representatives, General Hurley and Mr. Nelson, to China; their immediate purpose was to try to settle the dispute between General Chiang Kai-shek and General Stilwell.

—continued to distrust British motives, and to regard them as incompatible with American ideas about the future of Asiatic peoples. Thus in December, 1944, the Foreign Office received a note from the United States Embassy to the effect that the President expected the United States to be consulted about any arrangements for south-east Asia. The reason for this note appeared to be that the State Department had heard reports that the British and Dutch—and possibly also the French—might have come to an agreement. We had in fact made no agreements with the Dutch or the French about the Far East; the only agreement under consideration was one with the Dutch about civil affairs in the Netherlands East Indies, and was already known to the Americans. At the meeting in Malta before the Yalta Conference, Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius had a short discussion about the Far East. Mr. Eden mentioned reports that the President doubted whether the British Government really wanted Chinese unity. He explained that we were most anxious to see a strong and united China after the war. Mr. Stettinius said that he had not heard any reports about the President's doubts, and that he hoped that the British and Soviet Governments would do everything possible to help in securing an agreement between General Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists.

The President did not bring the British Delegation at Yalta into his talks with Stalin about the terms of Russian entry into the war with Japan. The Prime Minister signed the agreement reached in these discussions, though he regarded the terms as primarily an affair between the Americans and the Russians for which the British Government took no responsibility.<sup>1</sup> Here indeed the matter ended from the British point of view. The Foreign Office thought that, although, if asked, we should support American plans for a settlement between General Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists, British participation would not affect the result, and that it would be very difficult to find terms of settlement acceptable both to the Russians and the Americans. There was indeed a risk of transforming the Kuomintang-Communist dispute into an argument between the major Allies. Furthermore the Americans seemed still to be more suspicious of British than of Russian policy. General Hurley, who had been appointed United States Ambassador at Chungking, in February, 1945, was recalled to Washington for consultation, and returned through London in April. He arrived in London on April 4, and left on April 7. Owing to his many American engagements he had not much time to discuss matters with British officials, but he saw the Prime Minister once and Mr. Eden twice, and also attended a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff. He told the latter that, after conversations with M. Molotov and others in Moscow, he had established that the Chinese Communists

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 486-7.

were not really Communists, and were not supported by the Soviet Government, and that the Russians wanted to establish good relations with the Chinese Government. On the other hand he warned the Foreign Office that there was a strong feeling in the United States that American assistance should not be made available for the recovery of British colonial territory. General Hurley put this point to the Prime Minister in the slightly different form that Lend-Lease material should not be used for the recovery of colonial territory. He also mentioned to the Prime Minister the question of the return of Hongkong to the Chinese Government.<sup>1</sup>

General Hurley went on to Moscow, and again left there with the impression that Stalin had given him a promise of support for American policy in China, and was willing to continue to recognise the National Government under the leadership of General Chiang Kai-shek. Mr. Kennan, who was (in Mr. Harriman's absence) United States Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow, took a different view of Stalin's words, and thought that he (Stalin) had kept himself free to argue that unity was possible only if far-reaching concessions were made to the Communists, including strong representation in the central government. The Foreign Office also thought that the Soviet Government wanted to secure—through communist representation—an influence at Chungking equal to that of the Western Powers, and that otherwise they would not work for Chinese unity under General Chiang Kai-shek. Later events were to show only too clearly the accuracy of this forecast.

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister refused to discuss this question, and said that he was prepared to take all the 'Lend-Lease pistols and weapons' away from the British forces in Hongkong and supply them again from Great Britain after the defeat of the Germans. The Prime Minister described General Hurley as 'rather an old-world American figure.'

## CHAPTER XXV

### The definition of allied war aims, and proposals for the post-war organisation of security, from the Atlantic Charter to the Teheran Conference

#### (i)

*The definition of Allied war aims: the Atlantic Charter: the Declaration of the United Nations.*

THE entry of the United States into the war did not regain at once the military initiative for the Allies, but, in spite of the great victories won by the Germans and Japanese during the first eight months of 1942, it was possible, in M. Reynaud's words of June, 1940, 'to see light at the end of the tunnel.' One consequence of American belligerency was that the two western democracies could be more definite about their proposals for the security of the world after they had defeated their enemies.

In the early stages of the war the Foreign Office thought it impossible to give any precise definition of Allied intentions. No one could forecast what the position in Europe and elsewhere would be at the end of the war, or what territorial changes would be desirable or practicable. After the failure of the German plans of invasion, Great Britain and the Allies could affirm more convincingly to the world at large their intention to fight on until victory. The initiative in a statement of war aims, however, came, largely for domestic reasons, from the United States, and before American entry into the war.

During his meetings with Mr. Churchill on board ship in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, Mr. Roosevelt said at dinner on August 9, 1941, that he wanted to issue, with a communiqué about the meeting, a joint declaration of the broad principles 'which animate the United States and Great Britain at this fateful time.' Mr. Churchill gave the President a tentative draft of a declaration on August 10,<sup>1</sup> and on the following day Mr. Roosevelt produced a revised draft which was taken as a basis for discussion.

Mr. Churchill then telegraphed for the views of the War Cabinet on the draft.<sup>2</sup> The War Cabinet met in the evening of August 11 and

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this draft, see Churchill, III, 385-6. The draft was drawn up by Sir A. Cadogan on the Prime Minister's instructions. See also above, Introduction, p. xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's telegram to Mr. Attlee, see Churchill, III, 391-2.

again on the following morning. They suggested the insertion of an additional clause dealing with social security, and supported—though they wanted slight verbal changes—Mr. Churchill's proposed amendments safeguarding British obligations under the Ottawa agreements. They agreed that, in view of the President's desire for immediate publication, there was no time for consultation with the Dominions, and that Mr. Churchill should therefore sign the declaration as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The War Cabinet telegraphed to the Dominion Prime Ministers that a short declaratory statement was being made, and that the text would be sent to them as soon as possible.<sup>1</sup>

The publication of the Atlantic Charter implied American intervention, if not actual belligerency, on a scale sufficient to liberate the nations under German control. The Charter also took the offensive against German (and, for that matter, Russian) propaganda about the 'pseudo-democracies.' In this respect the terms of the document, as a reassertion of civilised standards, gained in popularity from the failure of the Germans to organise a 'new Europe' or even to behave in a civilised way towards the peoples under their domination.

On the other hand it was necessary for the British and Dominion Governments, and their Allies, to examine carefully the implications of the Charter to which they had been committed somewhat hastily by President Roosevelt. The history of Mr. Wilson's Fourteen Points shewed the danger of vague and high-sounding phraseology as the basis of a legal document such as a treaty of peace. In any case the Charter recognised American claims to share in the determination of the post-war settlement. The Foreign Office therefore had to consider its practical application with special regard to the interpretation which Americans were likely to give to it. The British view at this time was that they were unlikely to accept any responsibility for the territorial status of Europe, or to be parties to a treaty which would automatically involve the United States in war outside the western hemisphere. The Foreign Office considered that we should try at least to avoid a return to isolationism by bringing the United States into close collaboration over economic reconstruction. It was most desirable to get some kind of international organisation which would put into effect the terms of the Charter. The minimum requirements were an international Labour Office, an international Bank, and a Disarmament Commission. These organisations would require some kind of political direction and control, in other words, an International

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<sup>1</sup> The text as finally agreed between the Prime Minister and the President was published on August 14, and became generally known as the Atlantic Charter. It is of interest that there is no official text of the Charter, in the form of a signed copy, in the British archives. Further evidence of the haste and informality with which the declaration was drawn up is provided by the fact—which was seized upon by hostile opinion in the United States—that there is no mention in it of freedom of conscience or religion.

Council, on the lines of the Council of the League, though not necessarily an Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

At an inter-Allied meeting in London in the latter part of September, 1941,<sup>2</sup> M. Maisky shewed the Russian uneasiness over the Charter. M. Maisky had told Mr. Eden on August 26 that the Soviet Government did not object to it, though they would have altered some of the phrases, and thought that they ought to have been consulted about it. M. Maisky made a statement at the London meeting which sounded somewhat hollow in view of Russian action in 1939 and 1940. He said that the Soviet Government upheld the right of every nation to sovereign independence and territorial integrity and would render all possible assistance to peoples who were victims of aggression and fighting for their independence.

The next general declaration came more quickly than had been expected. After making sure that their European Allies had no secret commitments which might embarrass the Administration as the Treaty of London had embarrassed Mr. Wilson, the United States Government prepared for submission to Mr. Churchill, on his visit to Washington in December, 1941, a draft declaration, or rather two drafts of a declaration committing the signatories to employ their full resources until the defeat of the 'Axis forces of conquest' and re-affirming the 'purposes and principles' of the Atlantic Charter. The War Cabinet—in the absence of the Prime Minister—was thus faced with the difficult task of accepting, without time for full examination, another proposal of the highest importance. The Prime Minister telegraphed on December 24 that either draft or a combination of both would be satisfactory. He asked for the views of the War Cabinet and suggested that he should be allowed a certain latitude of choice.

The War Cabinet considered the drafts immediately, and replied that they were in general agreement with them. They made a number of suggestions, of which the most important was the inclusion (as in the Atlantic Charter) of a reference to social security. They thought that the declaration should be signed by all the Allies, including the Free French. They also considered that the enumeration of the British and Dominion Governments in the list of signatories should

<sup>1</sup> On September 9 the Prime Minister said in the House of Commons that the Charter did not deal with the application of the broad principles which it proclaimed, and that it did not qualify in any way British statements of policy about the development of constitutional government in India, Burma, or other parts of the Empire. 'At the Atlantic meeting we had in mind, primarily, the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government, and national life of the States and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke, and the principles governing any alterations in the territorial boundaries which may have to be made.' *Parl. Deb.* 5th Ser., H. of C., vol. 374, cols. 67-9.

<sup>2</sup> An earlier inter-Allied meeting had been held in June, 1941. The meeting expressed the determination of the Allies to fight on until victory, but did not attempt to define the terms of a peace settlement.

be in the normal form, i.e. the Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and South Africa.<sup>1</sup>

On December 28 the Foreign Office received from Lord Halifax<sup>2</sup> a new draft which had been made by the President and approved by the Prime Minister. The War Cabinet met on the night of December 28–29. They again asked strongly for the inclusion of the Free French among the signatories, and for a reference to social security in the text. They also repeated their suggestions about the enumeration of the Dominion Governments.<sup>3</sup> Lord Halifax reported on the night of December 30–31 that the State Department accepted the inclusion of India, and would try to get a change in the order of enumeration, but that the President was unlikely to agree because he wanted the U.S.S.R. and China to appear early in the list. Lord Halifax had told Mr. Berle that ‘having regard to Russian susceptibilities’ (Mr. Roosevelt was having trouble with M. Litvinov over a reference to religious freedom), we should be prepared to accept the order laid down in the draft. Mr. Roosevelt, however, would not agree to the inclusion of the Free French National Committee as an original party to the declaration, since he regarded this degree of recognition as incompatible with the continuance of relations with the Vichy Government.<sup>4</sup> Lord Halifax had been unable to obtain a reference to social security in the final draft. Mr. Roosevelt would have accepted it, but M. Litvinov refused any further change without getting approval from Moscow.

An answer to this telegram was sent by Mr. Attlee, Mr. Eden and Lord Cranborne on the evening of December 31. They considered it ‘most regrettable’ that the ‘prejudices’ of the State Department should put us in the false position of signing an inter-Allied document which excluded one of the Allies—the Free French. They pointed out that the omission of the term ‘social security’ would be ‘very much questioned by a large section of opinion’ in Great Britain and among the Allies. They still regarded the order of enumeration as important, and suggested that, in order to meet Russian susceptibilities, the U.S.S.R. and China might come before the British group. Lord Halifax was instructed to insist on this compromise. He was also asked why the urgency was ‘so great as to oblige us to accept a

<sup>1</sup> This list as telegraphed accidentally omitted New Zealand. The enumeration as proposed by the President began with the U.S.A., China, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.S.R. Other Governments then followed in alphabetical order.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister had left for Ottawa on December 28.

<sup>3</sup> A further difficulty had arisen when, with the approval of his Council and in reply to a question from the War Cabinet, the Viceroy of India wished India to be associated with the declaration and to appear as a separate signatory. The War Cabinet suggested that, in order to bring in the Indian Princes, the term ‘High Contracting Parties’ would be more suitable than ‘Governments signatory.’ Mr. Berle, however, pointed out to Lord Halifax that the use of the term ‘High Contracting Parties’ would convert the declaration into a treaty which would require submission to the Senate.

<sup>4</sup> The President and Mr. Hull were at this time much offended by General de Gaulle’s action over St. Pierre and Miquelon. See above, pp. 110–1.



declaration with these defects.' Mr. Churchill replied to this telegram on January 1 after discussing with Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull the points raised in it. The reply did not reach London until January 2, i.e. the day on which the declaration was published. Mr. Churchill said that there had been no time to get agreement on the proposed amendments because Mr. Roosevelt wanted publication at once and M. Litvinov could not accept any change without reference to Moscow.<sup>1</sup> On January 3 Mr. Churchill telegraphed that the President had suggested the title 'United Nations' to cover the Powers working together under the declaration. The term 'alliance' would have caused constitutional difficulties in the United States, and the words 'Associated Powers' were too flat.

(ii)

*Consideration of post-war problems in the autumn of 1942: the 'four-Power plan': Foreign Office proposals for an Inter-Allied Armistice and Reconstruction Committee: President Roosevelt's use of the term 'unconditional surrender' at the Casablanca Conference: the Prime Minister's note of January 30, 1943, to the Turkish Ministers at Adana.*

Until the late autumn of 1942, although there had been much informal discussion on British policy with regard to the organisation of security and the resettlement of Europe after the war, Mr. Eden did not put any definite suggestions before the War Cabinet. The Prime Minister was disinclined, and indeed unable, to give time to large questions of post-war policy while the military situation remained critical on every front. In any case the attitude of the Russians towards the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations, as well as their demands on Poland and the Baltic States, showed that a good deal of hard negotiation—and hard bargaining—would be required to persuade them to accept British or American views about a future world security organisation and the political settlement of Europe.

The Foreign Office as yet had little definite information about the American views.<sup>2</sup> The President and the State Department, in spite of their emphasis on the 'United Nations,' seemed to favour a world organisation directed by the four Great Powers (the President insisted

<sup>1</sup> In view of the President's continued refusal to include the Free French, Mr. Churchill had suggested the addition of the words 'or authorities' to the invitation to other nations to adhere to the declaration. M. Litvinov, however, rejected this change without reference to Moscow. On January 4 the State Department announced that the United States Government, as the depository for the declaration, would 'receive' statements of adherence to its principles 'from appropriate authorities which are not Governments.'

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Richard Law, M.P., and Mr. Ronald, of the Foreign Office, had visited the United States in August, 1942, for general talks on post-war problems. Mr. Law was at this time Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He was appointed Minister of State in September, 1943.

on including China and excluding France). This plan allowed for regional organisations in western and eastern Europe, and in the Far and Middle East, but such organisations would be presided over by one of the Great Powers. The system would rest on an immense American sea and air power and (in a slightly secondary degree) on the British Navy and Air Force and the Russian Army. The Americans seemed to be thinking that only the four Great Powers should be allowed any major armaments.

The plans for a World Security Organisation had a logical and practical priority over schemes for the future of Germany. If the Great Powers remained united, and if they set up a World Organisation dominated by themselves, they could determine without much difficulty what should happen to a defeated Germany. The Americans appeared to be considering the break-up of the German Reich into a loose confederation of five or six sovereign States each subject to some amount of international supervision, and deprived not only of arms, but of the machinery for making them. The Americans also seemed to have in mind the absorption of 'Walloon' Belgium by France, and the creation of a new national unit out of Flanders (this term was not more closely defined), Luxembourg, Alsace-Lorraine, the Eiffel and Palatinate areas, and possibly the Ruhr.

The first attempt in the Foreign Office to draw up a British plan for a World Organisation was made in a long memorandum by Mr. Jebb.<sup>1</sup> This memorandum (which later underwent many changes of phrasing) was headed 'The Four-Power Plan.' Mr. Jebb asked whether the American views (as far as they were known) of 'four-Power' control were practicable, and whether such control would accord with British interests. He regarded the inclusion of China as due solely to American wishes; the control would in fact be 'three-Power', though we should try for the inclusion of France. He considered that, in spite of the drain on our resources during the war, we could continue to act as a World Power on a level with the United States and the U.S.S.R., though, unlike them, we could not fall back on isolation. We could also count upon Russian and American willingness to collaborate with us if the 'control' were directed against preventing further German or Japanese aggression. There would be no question of *Gleichberechtigung* for Germany or Japan, and in this respect, three-Power or four-Power control was entirely different from the conception underlying the League of Nations. Even so, we could not be sure that the plan would work. The uncertainties of American policy, the suspicions of the U.S.S.R., and a dislike of 'Great Power tyranny' among the Dominions and the smaller Powers would be difficult obstacles.

There was, however, from our point of view, no satisfactory alter-

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. H. M. G. Jebb was in charge of the Economic and Reconstruction Department of the Foreign Office.

native. If the United States refused to enter into any commitments, we should have to base our policy on an alliance with the U.S.S.R. in which we should be forced into concessions likely to estrange opinion from us not only in the United States but also in the Dominions. If the Russians refused cooperation, we should eventually have to accept the collaboration of Germany, with the feeble hope that the Germans would undergo a change of heart and turn away from aggression.

In sending a summary of this memorandum to the Prime Minister on October 5, 1942, Mr. Eden said that we ought to come to a decision now on the broad lines of our policy and that the lack of any clear direction hampered our negotiations with the Americans, our propaganda to occupied countries, and our relations with our European Allies. Mr. Lie and Dr. van Kleffens, respectively Norwegian and Dutch Ministers for Foreign Affairs, had in fact suggested the establishment of permanent bases for the use of Anglo-American forces in an area ranging from Norway to France.<sup>1</sup>

On November 8, 1942, Mr. Eden submitted another memorandum to the War Cabinet, pointing out that, although our decisions could be only provisional, we ought to lay down some general principles for our post-war policy. In the absence of any statements by us, the Russians were suspecting that we and the Americans wanted them to be permanently weakened by the war; the Americans doubted whether we should be willing to undertake wide responsibilities in or outside Europe, and the smaller Allies were uneasy because we did not give a lead or suggest how they could survive in a post-war Europe which would continue to be dominated even by a defeated Germany. Mr. Eden repeated his support of the Four-Power plan. Sir S. Cripps at this time wrote a memorandum in which he developed this plan a stage further by proposing a Council of Europe,<sup>2</sup> to deal with political, economic, and social issues (including minority issues) likely to disturb the peace.

The War Cabinet considered these memoranda on November 27. They accepted generally the idea of four-Power cooperation, with China as one of the four Powers. They discussed the proposal for a World Council and subsidiary Councils, but decided for the time not to make any proposals. They did not discuss the 'Four-Power' plan again before Mr. Eden went to Washington in March, 1943. Mr. Eden, however, submitted another paper to them on January 16,

<sup>1</sup> See also below, pp. 463-4.

<sup>2</sup> This Council would include British, American, and Russian representatives. Sir S. Cripps also suggested Councils of Asia and America, and the association with them of two Councils representing the British Commonwealth, which already had its Imperial Conference, and the republics of the U.S.S.R. These five Councils would be represented on a Supreme World Council.

1943. This paper was headed 'The United Nations Plan'; it was written by Mr. Jebb with the object of combining some of Sir S. Cripps' ideas with those in earlier Foreign Office memoranda. The reason for bringing forward the paper at this time was that the Foreign Office were beginning to think that the major Allies might not have reached agreement on a common policy at the end of the war. The end of the war seemed nearer in January, 1943, than in October, 1942, and, apart from the question of a World Security Organisation, an agreed plan was needed for the treatment of Germany. The memorandum repeated, in a more definite form, the proposal for a World Council of the Four Powers, with the probable inclusion of France, and also suggested the establishment, in the first instance, of an Inter-Allied Armistice and Reconstruction Commission. The most important work of this Commission would be the pacification of Europe and the restoration of its economic life; the measures taken for this purpose might lead in time to the development of the Commission into a Council of Europe on which all European States would be represented, including the United Kingdom, the U.S.S.R., and if possible, the United States.

The meeting between the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt at Casablanca was concerned primarily with winning the war. The President, however, introduced one phrase of very considerable political importance. He proposed that the communiqué to be issued at the end of the conference should include a declaration that the United States and Great Britain intended to continue the war until they had brought about the 'unconditional surrender' of the enemy Powers. The Prime Minister accepted this proposal, but suggested the exclusion of Italy on the grounds that this omission might encourage the Italians to make a separate peace. The Prime Minister consulted the War Cabinet on January 20 about the President's proposal and his own suggestion. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Eden replied that, in the opinion of the War Cabinet, the 'balance of advantage' lay against excluding Italy; such exclusion might cause misgivings in Turkey, the Balkans, and elsewhere, and, in any case, Italian morale was more likely to be affected by a knowledge of 'the rough stuff coming to them.'

The term 'unconditional surrender' was not used in the official communiqué. The Prime Minister did not mention to the War Cabinet any reason for its omission, though the reason seems to have been his own wish not to apply it to Italy. The War Cabinet received the draft of the communiqué, but did not comment on the omission. The President, however, without previously consulting the Prime Minister, used the words in a press conference. The Prime Minister was taken by

surprise, but thought it desirable to support the President's statement.<sup>1</sup>

After the Casablanca Conference the Prime Minister went to Cairo and thence to meet members of the Turkish Government at Adana.<sup>2</sup> He found the Turkish Ministers anxious about their future relations with Russia. He therefore drew up a note on the morning of January 30 giving his personal views about an International Security Organisation after the war, and his hope of British, American, and Russian cooperation. He mentioned the establishment, as part of a World Organisation, of an 'instrument of European Government.' This European governmental organisation would include as units the great and long-established nations of Europe and Asia Minor and also a number of confederations formed among the smaller States, e.g. Scandinavian, Danubian, and Balkan *blocs*.<sup>3</sup>

(iii)

*Mr. Eden's visit to Washington, March, 1943: the Prime Minister's conversations in Washington about post-war arrangements, May, 1943: Foreign Office proposals for an approach to the United States and Soviet Governments on the procedure for the negotiation and execution of armistices, and the setting up of a United Nations Commission for Europe, May-July, 1943.*

In the second week of March, 1943, Mr. Eden went to Washington for informal conversations on post-war questions.<sup>4</sup> He intended to point out to the Americans that unless the three Great Powers had

<sup>1</sup> For later controversies over the expediency of a demand for unconditional surrender, see below, Chapter XXVII, section (iv). The term had already been used in American military discussions before the Casablanca meeting. The President and his advisers seem to have been concerned to avoid the ambiguities in Mr. Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' which gave rise to much controversy after the German surrender in November, 1918. They do not seem to have realised and, at the Casablanca Conference, the Prime Minister does not seem to have pointed out to them (or the War Cabinet to him) the ambiguities in the term 'unconditional surrender,' e.g. surrender of what, and by whom, and on whose behalf? The President and the Prime Minister seem also to have assumed at this time that at least in the case of the major enemy Powers there would be governments competent to make a political as well as a military surrender.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 322-3.

<sup>3</sup> For the relevant part of the Prime Minister's statement, see Churchill, IV, 636-7. The Foreign Office had been considering, for some time past, the possibility of two confederations—one for central, and the other for south-east Europe, covering the States lying between Germany and Italy on the one side, and Russia and Turkey on the other. These confederations were desirable as a means of strengthening the collective power of resistance of the smaller countries to German, and possibly also to Russian pressure. During the course of 1942 and the first half of 1943 the Foreign Office continued to favour these plans, though they came increasingly to doubt whether they could be put into effect owing to the objections raised by the Soviet Government. The Prime Minister had already written to Mr. Eden, in a note of October 21, 1942, commenting on the memorandum on a 'Four-Power' plan, that he hoped for a Council of Europe, "consisting of perhaps ten units, . . . with several confederations—Scandinavian, Danubian, Balkan, etc.", and that he looked forward to a 'United States of Europe.' (Churchill, IV, 504.) In a broadcast of March 21, 1943, the Prime Minister spoke of the need to set up Councils of Europe and of Asia distinct from but subsidiary to a World Organisation of the United Nations.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Eden had intended to go to Washington in February, but postponed his visit owing to the Prime Minister's illness.

agreed upon some plan for Europe, there was little chance of putting an end to the chaotic conditions which would follow the collapse of the Nazi régime. He would also try to get a general discussion on a World Organisation, and an agreement that representation on a Council should be limited to those nations which could contribute materially to an international policing system. Since he would certainly have to discuss the future of Germany Mr. Eden circulated to the Cabinet a few days before he left for Washington a paper on the subject. He thought that, we ought to get American and Russian agreement to a military negotiation of an armistice; otherwise the German army and, possibly, the German people might repudiate the signature of terms by a civilian government as they had tried to repudiate responsibility for the treaty of Versailles. We should also avoid committing ourselves at the outset to the recognition of any central German government as distinct from the central administrative machinery which we might have to use. We should thus undertake the total military occupation of Germany.

The basis of our policy should be the disarmament of Germany and the prevention of her rearmament. We knew from experience that the will to enforce measures against rearmament might weaken; we should therefore consider what additional safeguards we could secure. We should deprive Germany of all territory acquired by violence or threats of violence during or before the war. We might dismember the Reich, and leave only a number of independent German States, or we might take away from the Reich large frontier areas and thereby ensure that the remaining 'Rump State' would be too weak to attempt aggression. We might leave the Reich territorially intact (within the frontiers of 1937) but insist on decentralisation, i.e. federalisation. In deciding between these types of policy we should have to keep in mind the strength of the German feeling for national unity, and the fact that the German economy had been built up on the basis of unity. Mr. Eden suggested that we should aim at the restoration of an independent Austria, possibly connected with some Central European Confederation, and of Czechoslovakia (with some minor frontier rectifications); the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France; the cession of East Prussia, Danzig, and the Oppeln district of Silesia to Poland, and, possibly the transfer of the Kiel Canal to the United Nations; the re-establishment of the territorial *status quo* in the Low Countries and Luxembourg; the imposition of some form of international control on German industry, especially in the Rhineland. We should also encourage any spontaneous particularist or even separatist movements with a view to the development of a federal Germany.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden also pointed out that we had to avoid the danger of an orientation of German policy towards the U.S.S.R. and the conclusion of a Russo-German alliance directed against the West.



Mr. Eden, with Mr. Strang and Mr. Jebb,<sup>1</sup> reached Washington on the night of March 12-13. He reported to the Prime Minister, after two meetings with the President, that Mr. Roosevelt wanted a concentration of armaments after the war in the hands of the 'policing Powers'—the United States, Great Britain, and the U.S.S.R. The other Powers might have rifles, but 'nothing dangerous.' Mr. Eden explained the obvious difficulties in the way of this plan. He found, however, that the President's main preoccupation was with Russo-American relations. To Mr. Eden's surprise Mr. Roosevelt did not find any difficulty in the Polish question. He thought that, if Poland received East Prussia, and some concessions in Silesia, she would gain rather than lose by agreeing to the Curzon line. Mr. Roosevelt agreed with Mr. Eden that, even if the Russians were aiming at extending their influence over Europe, our attempts to work with them would not make matters any worse; we had therefore to act on the assumption that Stalin meant to keep the promises of collaboration in the Anglo-Russian treaty. The President was willing to accept the Russian claim to the Baltic States. He hoped for some kind of plebiscite in these States, but considered that, if Russia decided to take them, no one could turn her out. Mr. Roosevelt seemed to think that dismemberment would be the only safe solution of the German problem. He suggested, tentatively, the creation of a new State of Wallonia on the western borders of Germany, but did not come back to this proposal after Mr. Eden had pointed out some of the difficulties in it. He also suggested the establishment of a separate kingdom of Serbia. Finally he spoke of the need to associate China with the other World Powers.

On March 24 Mr. Welles explained to Mr. Eden his idea that the four major Powers should form something like an executive committee of the United Nations. In order to avoid the impression of 'Great Power dictatorship' we should authorize certain large regional groups to elect members to a World Council; if this Council failed to settle a dispute, the four Great Powers should enforce a decision. Mr. Welles also wanted a general body like the Assembly of the League in which every nation would have an opportunity to state its views. Mr. Welles and Mr. Eden discussed ways of fitting this scheme into the Prime Minister's plan for a Council of Europe. Mr. Welles said that American public opinion would not accept the responsibility of membership of such a Council if the matter were stated in these terms; there was a great difference between asking the United States to become involved in European affairs, and asking them to share in the general policing of the world.

On March 27 Mr. Eden, with Lord Halifax and Mr. Strang, had a long talk with the President, Mr. Hull, Mr. Welles, Mr. Hopkins,

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<sup>1</sup> Sir A. Cadogan was prevented by illness from going with Mr. Eden.



and Mr. Winant. The President gave his views on the post-war organisation of the United Nations. These views were much like those which Mr. Welles had already put forward. The President insisted on the inclusion of China as one of the four Powers,<sup>1</sup> and upon giving the organisation a world-wide rather than a regional basis. He too explained that American opinion would undertake responsibilities only on a world-wide basis. The President then spoke about an international trusteeship for certain areas. He did not say much about disputed territories in Europe. The State Department was already considering a British draft on colonial territories.<sup>2</sup> The discussion was therefore mainly over Far Eastern and Pacific territories, and parts of the French Empire. The President's view was that Manchuria and Formosa should be returned to China, and southern Sakhalin to Russia. The Japanese-mandated islands in the Pacific should pass to the trusteeship of the United Nations, and all other Pacific islands (except the French Marquesas and Tuamotu islands) should remain

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden thought that the President was using American interest in China as a means of leading the people of the United States to accept international responsibilities.

<sup>2</sup> On December 9, 1942, the War Cabinet had accepted (subject to the agreement of the Dominion Governments) a draft declaration on future colonial policy. They considered a declaration necessary in view of opinion generally in the United States, and of the President's large though somewhat vague ideas about trusteeship. They had in mind a unilateral declaration, but Lord Halifax reported that Mr. Hull favoured a joint Anglo-American statement, possibly supported by other colonial Powers, e.g. the Netherlands. A draft text was sent to Lord Halifax on February 1, 1943, and given by him to Mr. Hull three days later. Mr. Hull did not reply to it before Mr. Eden's visit to Washington. On March 29—just before he was leaving Washington for Ottawa—Mr. Eden was given the text of an American redraft. The British Government were unable to accept this redraft, since it called, e.g. for the fixing of dates, as soon as was practicable, for the grant of full independence to all colonies, and made no distinction between dependent territories and territories which had lost their independence. Mr. Eden gave Mr. Winant an *aide-mémoire* on the subject on May 26, 1943. Mr. Winant promised a redraft of his own, but did not produce it. He also seems to have omitted to send the *aide-mémoire* to Washington. Since the United States Government appeared for the time to have lost interest in the matter, the British Government took no further steps about it, though Mr. Oliver Stanley made a statement on British policy in the House of Commons on July 13, 1943. (See Parl. Deb., 5th ser., H. of C., vol. 391, cols. 47-70.)

At the Quebec Conference in 1943 the President gave Mr. Churchill a draft declaration on National Independence which was, in fact, the American redraft of the previous March. Mr. Churchill made no comment on it. Mr. Hull also mentioned it to Mr. Eden. Mr. Hull had not seen the British *aide-mémoire* given in May to Mr. Winant. Mr. Eden showed him a copy of it, but did not make any further comment on the American text. Mr. Hull circulated the American text (though it was not printed as one of the Conference memoranda) at the Moscow Conference. Mr. Eden said that he was not prepared to discuss the text. M. Molotov said that he would study it.

Dr. I. Bowman, when in London with Mr. Stettinius in April, 1944, told the Foreign Office that the State Department still wanted a declaration. Their idea was now to emphasise the promotion of material well-being and self-government rather than political independence, but they envisaged international machinery of a supervisory and not merely a consultative character. He said that American opinion would expect something to be said on the subject in connexion with the World Organisation. Mr. Stanley told him that the British Government would not go beyond the parliamentary statement of July 13, 1943.

The Foreign Office thought that the Americans wished for a statement in order to justify their own plans to annex certain Japanese islands in the Pacific, and because the President wanted in his election campaign to avoid any risk of being called a champion of imperialism. See also below, pp. 530-2 and 534-5.

under existing sovereignty, but should have a common economic policy on lines similar to those already proposed for the West Indies. The two French groups of islands would go under trusteeship. International trusteeships would also be set up for Korea, French Indo-China, and Timor.

Mr. Eden told the President that experience in the New Hebrides had shown the practical difficulties of international administration even under trusteeship, and that it would be desirable to hand over the administration to a single trustee. The President also suggested that the United States and Great Britain should act respectively as 'policemen' at Dakar and Bizerta. Mr. Eden said that the President was being very hard to the French. Mr. Roosevelt answered that France would need assistance after the war, and might be willing in return to place certain parts of French territory at the disposal of the United Nations. Mr. Welles reminded the President that the United States had promised the restoration of French possessions. Mr. Roosevelt thought that this promise referred only to North Africa, but Mr. Welles said that there was no such limitation. The President again referred to the dismemberment of Germany as necessary for the security of Europe. Mr. Eden said that Mr. Churchill had often spoken in favour of the idea, and that he (Mr. Eden) was inclined to agree with it.

The Prime Minister agreed with Mr. Eden that there would be strong opposition to proposals to rank France lower than China even in matters affecting Europe, and to put all Europe after disarmament under the control of the four Powers. Mr. Eden himself thought the conversation not unsatisfactory, although we did not know how far the President was giving a considered opinion and not merely putting forward ideas for discussion. In any case we could not accept a proposal to reduce France to the status of a second-rate Power. On the other hand there was sufficient general agreement between the United States and ourselves on the broad lines of a post-war security organisation, and therefore no need to try at this time to settle details.

Mr. Strang and Mr. Jebb had in fact talked in more detail with officials of the State Department about the immediate problems of an armistice and the period following it. They found that the State Department agreed with the British view that a strong France was necessary for the security of Europe. The Americans said that they were interested in the British suggestion for a United Nations Commission for Europe which would begin by coordinating the activities of the various armistice Commissions.<sup>1</sup> They did not favour

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<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 443-4.

the allocation of separate zones to British, American, and Russian forces of occupation in Germany, since they thought that this plan would result in the creation of areas of influence.

During his visit to Washington in May, 1943, for a military conference, the Prime Minister had an informal discussion with a few leading Americans<sup>1</sup> on post-war plans. Mr. Churchill explained his views<sup>2</sup> about a World Council, and three regional Councils of Europe, the American hemisphere, and the Pacific. Mr. Churchill said that the European Council might be formed from some twelve States or Confederations, and that it might create 'a form of United States of Europe.'<sup>3</sup> He wanted a strong France, and the association of the United States in the policing of Europe. He thought that Prussia should be 'detached' from the rest of Germany, and might be subdivided. He suggested a 'fraternal association' between the United States and the British Commonwealth, allowing, possibly, some common form of additional citizenship under which citizens of the one might be given voting privileges after residential qualification in the territories of the other. He also supported 'the common use of bases for the common defence of common interests.' The Americans present agreed generally with the Prime Minister's views of a World Organisation.

The Foreign Office regarded it as satisfactory that a number of leading Americans, including Mr. Welles, should have accepted the desirability of a joint four-Power responsibility for keeping the peace. They were doubtful about the Prime Minister's suggestion for a joint 'American-Commonwealth' citizenship, since these proposals might give the impression of an Anglo-Saxon dictatorship. They also thought that the Prime Minister's idea of detaching Prussia from Germany was not an adequate solution of the German problem. Apart from the facts that the 'Nazi virus' was not confined to Prussia, and that Prussia, which extended from Aachen to the Polish frontier, included a large number of Catholics and 'ethnic non-Prussians,' the greater part of German industry was in the north and, as soon as an Allied occupation ceased, the two parts of Germany would look for reunion. The Foreign Office agreed with most of the Prime Minister's proposals for confederation, but were less hopeful of the prospects of bringing them about.

During the next few months the Foreign Office considered in some detail the larger plans for a World Organisation as well as proposals

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wallace, who was at this time Vice-President, Mr. Stimson, Mr. Ickes, Mr. Sumner Welles, and Senator Connally.

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of this conversation, see Churchill, IV, 717-21.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Churchill mentioned with approval the views of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi on a Pan-European Union.

for the future of Germany.<sup>1</sup> The general tendency, however, in the Foreign Office and in the War Cabinet, was to concentrate upon the more immediate question of obtaining agreement with the Russians and Americans on the form of an armistice with Germany, the means of putting it into effect, and the machinery for maintaining order in Europe. Sir A. Cadogan summed up, in a minute of April 13, 1943, the view taken at this time about any larger plans for the future. Sir A. Cadogan thought that, if, owing to continued agreement between the Great Powers, and a readiness on their part to use force when necessary, we kept the means for checking German and Japanese aggression, we should not find it difficult to construct 'ancillary organs which might have their uses.' If we did not retain the means for checking aggression, all these ancillary constructions were nothing but 'card castles,' as in the case of the League. Hence for the present we need not discuss in detail the various possible forms of organisation. We might, however, try to reach an agreement with the United States and the U.S.S.R. on our respective functions and aims after the end of the European war, i.e. the broad lines of an armistice, the nature and extent of the occupation of enemy countries, precautions for maintaining disarmament, the economic control which we should exercise, etc. If we could reach agreement on these lines, we might be able to organise an effective 'policing' of Europe with which other countries might be associated. The 'grim' feature in the outlook was that everything depended upon agreement between the three Powers, and upon their determination to use force, if necessary, to restrain a breach of the peace. At all events, we should concentrate upon trying to get such agreement before we began to design 'all the outbuildings of the future Palace of Peace.'

On May 25, 1943, while Mr. Churchill was in Washington, Mr. Eden submitted to the War Cabinet a memorandum on this practical question of 'Armistices and Related Problems.' He suggested an approach to the United States and Soviet Governments on the procedure for the negotiation and execution of an armistice. He considered that Germany should be 'totally occupied,' and might be divided for this purpose into three zones. The occupying forces in these zones would be respectively British, Russian, and American, but would include forces of the other Allies, and be under inter-Allied command. The principle of a joint United Nations occupation

<sup>1</sup> Lord Selborne, Minister of Economic Warfare, circulated a paper in April in which he wrote that the Ministry did not regard as practicable or sufficient proposals for controlling German war potential, and that the only lasting safeguard would be to dismember Germany. Mr. Attlee submitted a short memorandum in July to the effect that the aggressive element in Germany was the Junker class which had allied itself to the masters of heavy industry in Westphalia and elsewhere. Mr. Attlee considered it necessary to break up this combination.

would thereby be maintained, but problems of supply and administration would be simplified. Mr. Eden also proposed the establishment of a supervisory body—a 'United Nations Commission for Europe'—composed of high-ranking political representatives of the three major Allies, France, the smaller European Allies, and, possibly, of any Dominion Government willing to contribute to the policing of Europe. This Commission would act as the supreme United Nations authority in Europe; it would direct and coordinate the work of the several Armistice Commissions,<sup>1</sup> and deal with current military, political and economic problems connected with the maintenance of order.

Mr. Eden thought an agreement on these lines necessary if we were to avoid the signature by the Soviet Union of a separate armistice and the organisation of a separate Russian system in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Government might refuse to discuss even this machinery of collaboration, and might go their own way without regard to our own and American wishes, but we had nothing to lose by assuming their cooperation and, indeed, unless we could set up some machinery of co-operation, 'we should have very shortly, after the conclusion of this war, to set about preparing for the next.'<sup>2</sup> The War Cabinet agreed generally that we might begin informal discussions with the Russians and Americans on the question raised in Mr. Eden's paper, but that we should not yet commit ourselves to a total Allied occupation of Germany. Mr. Eden gave M. Maisky on July 2, and Mr. Winant on July 14, an *aide-mémoire* summarising the British proposals, but without reference to the discussion on the occupation of Germany.

Mr. Eden also circulated to the War Cabinet on July 7 another paper by Mr. Jebb entitled 'United Nations Plan.' This paper summed up the general conclusions reached in the Foreign Office memoranda and discussions of the past few months on the subject of post-war organisation. The paper described more fully the proposal for a United Nations Commission for Europe which might at some stage become a Council of Europe. Neutrals might be admitted to such a Council as soon as was practicable, and, without any long delay, Italy and the lesser enemy States; the admission of Germany would have to be postponed until the occupation had ended, and could take place then only after a unanimous decision of the World Council.

<sup>1</sup> The 'United Nations Commission' would thus take over the directing functions previously proposed (see p. 436) for an Inter-Allied Armistice and Reconstruction Committee. The administration of the separate armistices would be placed in the hands of Inter-Allied Armistice Commissions established in the countries concerned.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Cripps, in a memorandum of June 15 to the War Cabinet commenting on Mr. Eden's paper, supported the view put forward by the Americans, during Mr. Eden's visit to Washington, that the allocation of large zones of separate occupation to the three Powers would mean the creation of spheres of influence. The War Cabinet thought there was some force in this argument, but that there would be great administrative difficulties in mixing up contingents of the three Allies. The Chiefs of Staff also regarded as necessary the disposal of the Allied forces of occupation in three separate zones. This plan was therefore accepted by the War Cabinet. See also, below, p. 477.

(iv)

*Appointment of the Committee on Armistice Terms and Civil Administration, August 4, 1943: American proposal for a four-Power declaration on the establishment of a general international organisation: agreement at the Moscow Conference to a four-Power declaration and a British proposal for a European Advisory Commission: exchange of views at the Teheran Conference on the treatment of Germany.*

On July 29, 1943, the Prime Minister suggested that the various memoranda on a post-war settlement should be considered in the first instance by a small Cabinet Committee. This Committee held only four meetings, and was then allowed to lapse, apparently in view of the proposals at the first Quebec Conference for a three-Power meeting. A second committee, however, suggested by Mr. Eden and approved by the Prime Minister, was of more importance. The Prime Minister circulated a memorandum to the War Cabinet on August 4, 1943, to the effect that the growing volume and complexity of the problems connected with liberated enemy territories made it necessary to establish a ministerial committee to settle minor questions and make recommendations to the War Cabinet on major issues. The Prime Minister had therefore appointed a ministerial Committee on Armistice Terms and Civil Administration under the chairmanship of Mr. Attlee.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister had set up this Committee primarily in connexion with the surrender of Italy which seemed likely to come very soon. He was also just about to leave for the Quebec meeting. He knew, from information given to the Foreign Office, that he would be asked to subscribe to another of the large declarations in which the President liked to announce his policy. On August 21 Mr. Hull gave to Mr. Eden (who had joined the Prime Minister at Quebec) the draft of a four-Power Declaration. This Declaration provided for common action in all matters relating to the surrender and disarmament of the enemy, and the occupation of enemy territory. The most important clause in the draft ran as follows: 'They [the four Powers]

<sup>1</sup> This Committee was, in fact, a continuation of an *ad hoc* committee set up to consider armistice terms for Italy. On April 19, 1944, the Committee on Armistice Terms was given wider terms of reference, including the consideration of 'general political and military questions in the post-war period.' The Committee now changed its title to that of 'Armistice and Post-War Committee.' Mr. Attlee continued as chairman.

A Post-Hostilities Planning Sub-Committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee was established on August 9, 1943, under the chairmanship of Mr. Jebb, to consider, primarily, post-war strategic questions, and to maintain close contact with the three Service departments and the Foreign Office. The Committee was instructed to propose draft Instruments for the formal suspension of hostilities with enemy Powers, and to submit plans for the enforcement of such instruments. The Committee was to report to the Chiefs of Staff Committee or to the Ministerial Committee on Armistice Terms and Civil Administration. The Committee underwent some reorganisation in April, 1944, but its main duties were unchanged.



recognise the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all nations, and open to membership by all nations, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.'

The Foreign Office thought that—with a few changes of wording—the draft was satisfactory, but that there was little chance of getting Russian consent to it before the discussion at the proposed tripartite conference<sup>1</sup> of matters directly affecting Russian interests. They suggested therefore that the publication of the document should follow, and not precede the Conference. Before the Foreign Secretaries went to Moscow, however, it was clear that the main concern of the Russians was to be sure of the cross-Channel invasion in the spring of 1944. The Conference accepted without difficulty Mr. Hull's proposal for a four-Power declaration, and a proposal from Mr. Eden for a European Advisory Commission to consider and make joint recommendations on European problems connected with the termination of hostilities.<sup>2</sup>

The four-Power Declaration was published on October 30. After the Foreign Secretaries had agreed upon the text M. Molotov suggested setting up a Commission to begin a joint study of the questions relating to the establishment of a World Organisation. Mr. Hull was not in favour of a formally constituted Commission since it would get publicity and politicians and others in the United States would ask for representation on it. He proposed, and Mr. Eden and M. Molotov agreed, that the three Governments should hold informal discussions and exchange papers.

The question of the future of Germany was raised, though not fully discussed at the Moscow Conference. Mr. Hull submitted a memorandum dealing mainly with the immediate steps to be taken after the German unconditional surrender, and covering also a number of long-term proposals. Mr. Eden said that the British Government would like to see Germany divided after the war into a number of separate States; they thought that separatist movements should be encouraged, but were uncertain whether it would be desirable to impose dismemberment. Mr. Hull said that the United States Government had started with a definite inclination towards dismemberment, and that the trend of opinion was still in this direction, though less strongly so. M. Molotov explained that the Soviet Government were somewhat backward in their study of the question, probably owing to the military preoccupations of their leaders, but that they would give weight to any opinion

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 243-4.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 246.



in favour of dismemberment by force.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden brought forward, and the Conference agreed to publish, a declaration on the establishment of a free and independent Austria.<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister mentioned the future of Germany in a conversation with Stalin on November 28, 1943, after the formal opening of the Teheran Conference. Stalin said that Germany might well recover from the war within fifteen or twenty years, and might start a new war within a comparatively short time. The Prime Minister wanted to forbid the Germans to have a General Staff, or any military or civil aviation. He proposed the supervision of German industry, the isolation and division of Prussia, and the inclusion of Bavaria, Austria, and Hungary in a 'broad, peaceful, cow-like confederation.' Stalin thought these proposals insufficient.

The German question was discussed at the Teheran Conference indirectly, in relation to the proposed western frontier of Poland,<sup>3</sup> and directly at a meeting on December 1. At this latter discussion the President and Stalin favoured the break-up of Germany. The President suggested a division into five parts: (i) Prussia, (ii) Hanover and the north-western area, (iii) Saxony and the Leipzig area, (iv) Hesse-Darmstadt, Hesse-Cassel, and the area west of the Rhine, (v) Bavaria, Baden, and Wurttemberg. Kiel and the Canal, Hamburg, and the Ruhr and Saar areas would be under the control of the United Nations.

Mr. Churchill said that this plan was a new one.<sup>4</sup> He thought that, if Germany were divided into a number of small units, these units would have no means of independent existence. Hence it was necessary to give them some kind of life by attaching them to other combinations. He agreed that Prussia should be detached from the rest of Germany. He thought south Germany less belligerent, and likely to 'work in' with a Danubian Confederation. The President and Stalin, however, regarded the South Germans as equally dangerous. Stalin favoured partition on something like the President's plan, and did not believe in the 'viability' of a Danubian Confederation. He

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden commented that the Soviet position seemed similar to that of Great Britain, and that no remarks were needed about the activities of their respective leaders in connexion with military operations.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden had submitted to the War Cabinet in May, 1943, a memorandum on the future of Austria. The memorandum rejected the association of Austria with the Reich even on a federal basis, and considered that the chances of the survival of Austrian independence would be greater if Austria were included in a central or east European confederation, though the obstacles to the establishment of such a confederation were serious. In any case the first stage must be the restoration of a free and independent Austrian State.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 253-4.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Churchill's words were that the President had 'said a mouthful.'

realised that the Germans would try to unite; we should have to prevent them, if necessary by force, from so doing. The Prime Minister agreed with the idea of some kind of partition, but said that the Conference was making only a preliminary survey of a vast historical problem. Finally, with Stalin's approval, the President suggested that a special committee of the three Powers should be set up under the European Advisory Commission, to study the question.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There is no record in the British archives of any discussion of a World Security Organisation at the meetings of the Teheran Conference. See also below, p. 457, note 3.

## CHAPTER XXVI

Preparations for a Conference on the establishment of a World Security Organisation: the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, August 22—September 28, 1944: failure to reach agreement on the question of a 'Great Power veto': British and American compromise proposals

### (i)

*Preparations for a meeting to discuss proposals for the establishment of a World Security Organisation: British memoranda of April, 1944, on the scope and functions of a World Organisation.*

ON November 5, 1943, the United States Senate passed a resolution recognising the necessity of establishing 'at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, and open to membership of all such States, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.' A fortnight later the United States Government suggested to the British and Soviet Governments that the four Powers should invite the adherence of all 'peace-loving States' to the clause in the four-Power Declaration from which the phrasing of the Senate resolution had been taken. The Foreign Office, however, pointed out that the Moscow Conference had agreed that the three Powers should hold preliminary discussions; it would therefore be better to make some progress with these discussions before inviting enquiries from other Governments.

The State Department then changed their plan. Early in January, 1944, they told Lord Halifax that they intended to invite British, Russian, and possibly Chinese representatives to Washington for preliminary discussions, but that they had first to settle their own views. The most important point was whether the consent of each of the major Powers should be required for a decision to use force against an aggressor or whether a majority vote would be sufficient. American opinion was more likely to accept the principle of unanimous decision.

The Foreign Office replied on January 15 that they were doubtful about Chinese participation in the discussions, and thought that we ought to know whether the Russians would agree to it. The British Government had also not made up their minds about the kind of security organisation they wanted, and would like a few weeks' delay

before the discussions. The Americans themselves mentioned a date not earlier than February 22, and early in this month said that they would need a longer time for preparation. Meanwhile on February 8 they had proposed an exchange of papers with the Foreign Office before the meeting with the Russians. The Foreign Office replied on February 15 with a 'summary of topics' which they described as, roughly, the chapter headings of the detailed papers to be submitted and as a draft agenda for the discussions. The State Department drew up a similar list. Mr. Eden suggested on March 14 to the United States and Soviet Governments that the three Governments might now start work on papers which they would communicate to one another. The Foreign Office expected their papers to be ready in one or two months, and enquired about the American time-table. The State Department thought on April 1 that the discussions might take place at the end of May. Mr. Stettinius came to London in April, 1944, for political and economic talks, but the rate of progress on the American side was slow. At the end of May Mr. Hull told Lord Halifax that the United States Government wanted to know when the British and Soviet Governments would be ready to hold discussions; nearly three weeks later the President made a general statement about the American proposals, but the British Embassy in Washington was not given a copy of these proposals until July 18.

Meanwhile on June 12 Mr. Hull asked Lord Halifax whether we would agree to Anglo-American-Chinese conversations if the Russians were unwilling to join in talks with the Chinese. Mr. Hull said that the question was 'entirely psychological'; he had no illusions about Chinese strength, but American opinion would require China to be treated on a basis of equality with the three Powers. The Foreign Office replied that, although the holding of two parallel conferences would be a waste of time, we would agree to them provided that the Russians understood that the procedure was being adopted merely to put China in a position of technical equality. We should have to concentrate on the talks with the Americans and Russians, and not on those with the Chinese. The Russians agreed in principle to this plan; they did not send a formal acceptance until July 12, and later asked for a postponement of the conversations until about August 12.<sup>1</sup> They also suggested that the talks with the Chinese should follow the Anglo-American-Russian conversations.

In the third week of July Mr. Winant wrote to Mr. Eden that Mr. Hull would probably be the senior United States representative at

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<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office had also asked for at least a fortnight in order to study the American memoranda. August 14 was agreed as the opening day, but on August 5 the Russians asked for another postponement until August 21.

the discussions, especially in those dealing with 'basic policy.' Mr. Eden asked the British Embassy in Washington to explain that, if Mr. Hull took part in the discussions, he (Mr. Eden) would be asked why he was not attending them. He could not come at such short notice, and did not think a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries desirable at the present stage. Mr. Eden also asked the Russians for their views. M. Molotov agreed that the conversations were to be entirely 'preliminary'; the Russian representative would be the Soviet Ambassador in Washington.

Mr. Eden told the Americans that Sir A. Cadogan would be the British representative, and that Lord Halifax (who was in England) would take part if he were back in time. Mr. Eden suggested that, if the discussions were successful, they should be followed later by a meeting of Foreign Secretaries. The Americans also proposed a meeting, possibly in September at Casablanca, to launch the World Organisation. Mr. Eden telegraphed to Sir A. Cadogan that he would go anywhere, but that, if the meetings were held in North Africa, we should have to include French representatives. He doubted whether any date before the middle of October would be practicable, and thought that we ought not to exclude the Chinese from the talks at a ministerial level after they had been brought into the preliminary discussions.<sup>1</sup>

During these months of prolonged negotiation with the Americans and Russians a special interdepartmental committee in London had been considering in detail the proposals which the British Delegation would put forward for a World Security Organisation. This Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Law, reported on April 19, 1944, to the Armistice and Post-War Committee. They had prepared five memoranda, with a covering explanatory note. They suggested that these memoranda, and the note, might be submitted to a meeting of Dominion Prime Ministers which was to take place in London in May. They could then be used as a basis for the discussions in Washington. After making a few changes in the text the Armistice

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister commented on Mr. Eden's telegram that the meeting should be held in London, 'as it is our turn'; that the French should not be admitted until they had broadened their government, and that it was absurd to include China as one of the four Great Powers. Mr. Churchill said that the latest information from China pointed to the 'rise of a rival government to supplant Chiang Kai-shek, and there is always a Communist civil war impending there.' Mr. Churchill would not oppose the President's wish, but thought that we should leave him to argue about it with the Russians.

The Foreign Office noted in regard to the Prime Minister's minute (i) that we had implied in our proposals that France would be a permanent member of the World Council, and that the Americans explicitly and the Russians implicitly had agreed that the admission of France should follow the first meeting of the Council; (ii) that we had recognised China as one of the 'big Four' and would get into practical difficulties if we did not treat her as such.

and Post-War Committee submitted the documents to the War Cabinet on April 22.

The five memoranda were respectively on (a) the scope and nature of a permanent international organisation, (b) the pacific settlement of disputes, the question of guarantees, and the conditions in which action should be taken for the maintenance of peace and security, (c) the military aspect of a post-war security organisation, (d) the co-ordination of political and economic international machinery, (e) the method and procedure for establishing a world organisation. In his covering note Mr. Law wrote that the general intention was to retain the best features of the Covenant of the League, but to make the organisation more flexible, and the machinery of action more effective. The plan was based on the acceptance of certain essential principles; the means of carrying them into effect were left to be adapted to circumstances which could not be foreseen.

Mr. Law said that the institutions of Great Britain and the Commonwealth had grown in this way, but that our method of approach might appeal less to the United States, where the details of a written constitution were of such importance, or to the Russians, or again to the peoples of the Continent of Europe who had a different system of law, and always wanted 'explicit undertakings, no matter how often they have been broken.' We might therefore have to agree to changes in our plan, though in essentials the plan represented the maximum of international cooperation likely to be secured at the present time. From the point of view of the British Commonwealth, the Organisation must be world-wide; subordinate regional councils, however, were likely to develop, and, if they were suitably guided within the World Organisation, their advantages would outweigh their disadvantages.

Memorandum A therefore assumed—in addition to a World Assembly on which all members would be represented—a World Council of the Four Powers and a number of other States. The method of choosing these other States had been left open;<sup>1</sup> the memorandum did not even lay down the principle that one of the members of the Commonwealth other than the United Kingdom should always have a place on the Council. Such a demand would probably bring a Russian counter-demand that one of the constituent republics of the U.S.S.R. should always be represented. We should, however, try to secure membership for one of the Dominions. The memorandum had made no recommendations about the Secretariat and seat of the

<sup>1</sup> The memorandum stated that some form of election by the World Assembly would probably be agreed. It also pointed out that all the regions of the world must be adequately represented. The size, area, and continental distribution of States varied so much that agreement on this subject was essential. States as different in status and power as Canada and Panama had had equal rights of representation on the Council of the League. The principle of rotation had deprived the Council of experienced statesmen, and the creation of 'semi-permanent' seats had caused much resentment.

Organisation, since these questions were likely to be controversial, and should be postponed until a later stage of the discussions.

Under our proposals great power would rest with the World Council. It would, for example, take the initiative in action to maintain peace, and other members of the organisation would be bound to follow its decisions. The proposals, however, left open the question of giving permanently to the Great Powers a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. 'By doing so the association of the United States in the burden would be more explicitly obtained, but it may well be possible to secure that advantage without such definition as might seem to imply too great a recognition of the position of the Great Powers.'

Memorandum B took account of the dislike felt by members of the British Commonwealth to guarantees of territorial integrity and political independence such as those contained in Article X of the Covenant. The British proposals were therefore that the members of the Organisation should 'promise to settle all disputes in such a manner as not to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security without, however, guaranteeing the territorial integrity and political independence of member States.'<sup>1</sup> The memorandum explained the need for flexibility, and for basing the action of the Council on principles rather than on exact definition; the difficulties which had arisen at the League in an attempt to define 'aggression' showed that too rigid a statement of the occasions for action was likely to hinder the maintenance of peace and security.

The covering note said little about memoranda C, D, and E. Memorandum C, which was based on two earlier papers approved by the Chiefs of Staff, assumed the three objects of the World Organisation to be (i) to disarm Germany and Japan, (ii) to keep them disarmed, and (iii) to prevent them or any other aggressor from again upsetting the peace of the world. The memorandum regarded as impracticable the establishment of an international 'police force.' This conception implied a world State and required agreement on questions such as the size, composition, maintenance, location and command of the force. Such agreement would almost certainly be unobtainable. On the other hand the memorandum regarded both as necessary and practicable the establishment of a Military Staff Committee serving the World Council and the development of 'United Nations bases.'

<sup>1</sup> The memorandum distinguished between promises not to attempt to settle disputes by violence, and the promise suggested above. The memorandum and covering letter suggested that, if the latter kind of promise were agreed, the balance would be 'thrown more in the direction of change.' No examples were quoted to illustrate or justify this assertion. The memorandum also left open the question whether decisions on issues of principle should be taken unanimously or by a two-thirds majority, but considered that in all cases all the four Great Powers should be included in the majority; the votes of parties to the dispute would not be taken into account.



## (ii)

*The Prime Minister's paper of May 8, 1944: withdrawal of the paper, and insertion in the five memoranda of a proposal for a United Nations Commission for Europe: acceptance by the War Cabinet of the revised memoranda.*

The War Cabinet did not discuss the five memoranda when they received them on April 22. There was, however, an informal exchange of views on post-war organisation at a War Cabinet meeting on April 27 at which the Prime Minister mentioned favourably the proposal for setting up Regional Councils for Europe, America, and Asia, and, less probably, Africa. On May 4 Mr. Eden sent a summary of the five memoranda to the Prime Minister. Mr. Churchill agreed that the papers should be given to the Dominion Prime Ministers, and discussed at their meeting on May 11. He also put forward his own views in a memorandum of May 8. Mr. Churchill was occupied at this time, among many other things, with the anxious problems of the cross-Channel invasion; he could not study in detail the large number of Foreign Office and other departmental papers on matters of post-war organisation. His memorandum to the Dominion Prime Ministers repeated the general ideas which he had already expressed to President Roosevelt.<sup>1</sup> He gave special importance to the plan for Regional Councils. He hoped that the British Empire would maintain its unity, and wanted a 'Fraternal Association with the United States,' possibly through a continuation of the machinery of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the reciprocal use of bases. Within this framework the Prime Minister hoped that the United Kingdom would favour the establishment of a 'United States of Europe.'

The Foreign Office, on the other hand, held the view that Mr. Churchill's plan for a Council of Europe was not practicable, since, if it included United States representatives, it would be hardly distinguishable from the World Council, at all events in matters concerned with the settlement of disputes. They also thought that the Soviet Government would regard the plan for a 'United States of Europe'<sup>2</sup> as an attempt to set up a continental *bloc* against the U.S.S.R., and that in any case the *bloc* might ultimately be dominated

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> A Foreign Office paper written early in May (and, later, revised) on 'British policy towards Europe' pointed out that the term 'United States of Europe' was not clear. It might mean (a) a European State, excluding Great Britain, which would extend from Cape St. Vincent to the Curzon line, or (b) a loose association of European States, including Great Britain and the U.S.S.R., with a common meeting place to discuss European problems, and a central direction of certain services such as transport. It was therefore essential to distinguish between a 'Council of Europe' and a 'United States of Europe.' We could set up a European Organisation only through the establishment of a World Organisation which would harmonise the policies of the three Powers. The paper then referred to the proposed 'United Nations Commission for Europe.' See also above, p. 444.

by Germany. The Prime Minister, however, withdrew his paper after the discussions with the Dominion Prime Ministers because they objected to his proposed Councils of the Americas and of Asia, and to his suggestion that the Dominions should be represented on the World Council by the United Kingdom. Mr. Churchill asked the Foreign Office to reconsider their memoranda with a view to setting out the case for regional organisations, and to keep in mind the ultimate possibility of a 'United States of Europe.' After a first revise, which the Dominion Prime Ministers still found unsatisfactory, a definite reference was included in memorandum A to the need of some regional organisation for Europe, 'if only to prevent a repetition of the circumstances which have caused two World Wars to originate in that area . . . It is possible that out of some "United Nations Commission for Europe," as proposed in Mr. Eden's memorandum of July, 1943, there might grow a European organisation which, under the guidance of the three major Allies, might foster peaceful tendencies, heal the wounds of Europe, and at the same time prevent Germany from again dominating the Continent.' Mr. Eden suggested in a minute of June 2 to the Prime Minister, that this wording met the point which he (the Prime Minister) regarded as of the greatest importance, that is to say, the establishment of some regional European body upon which the three Great Powers would be represented.

With the Prime Minister's approval, the War Cabinet considered the revised memoranda on July 3. Mr. Eden explained that the revised texts had been discussed with the Dominions at an official level, and that their approval was expected. He said that the Dominion Prime Ministers had objected to the constitution of regional political bodies, but that they recognised that Europe was to some extent a special case, and were unlikely to oppose the establishment of machinery for dealing with European affairs on condition that the overriding authority of a World Organisation in regard to the settlement of political disputes was explicitly recognised.

The War Cabinet accepted generally the policy laid down in the memoranda, and approved of Mr. Eden's suggestion that the Armistice and Post-War Committee should consider the various matters upon which the memoranda set out alternatives. Among the more important questions were (i) the size of the Council. Mr. Eden thought France should be given a permanent seat, and that the smaller Powers might have six or seven representatives. (ii) the method of voting. In the case of decisions for the application of force, the responsibility for action would fall mainly on the Great Powers; the decision should therefore always include their votes. It would be undesirable to allow smaller States to prevent action against disturbers of the peace to whom they might be united by special ties; hence a two-thirds majority, including all the Great Powers, should

be sufficient. If coercive action were directed against one of the Great Powers, the vote of this Power should not be counted among the votes necessary for the requisite majority. In a case of this kind, however, the Organisation would have failed, and there was little use in asking what would happen. (iii) Regional Associations. Mr. Eden regarded the insertion into memorandum A of the proposal for a 'United Nations Commission for Europe' as useful. He described it as 'a projection into the peace of the European Advisory Commission' and as reinforcing the Anglo-Soviet Treaty and forming a bridge between eastern and western Europe. It would be designed, primarily, as part of the machinery for 'clearing up the war' and would not necessarily continue after this work was done. In any case major political disputes would be referred to the World Council. The Armistice and Post-War Committee agreed generally with these recommendations, and the War Cabinet accepted them on August 4.

## (iii)

*The Dumbarton Oaks Conference,<sup>1</sup> August 22–September 28, 1944: failure to obtain agreement with the Russians on the question of a 'Great Power veto': the Prime Minister's change of view on the question: Sir A. Cadogan's compromise proposal.*

Five days before the opening of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference Sir A. Cadogan had reported a general agreement in informal talks between the British and American Delegations.<sup>2</sup> He said that the outstanding question was that of a veto. The Americans appeared to have come provisionally to the conclusion that the Permanent Members of the Council should have a right of veto on any subject in which their own interests were involved, and that parties to a dispute should therefore be allowed, as in the League, to vote on it. Sir A. Cadogan had pointed out that there would be strong opposition within the Commonwealth to a system in which the United Kingdom could prevent any action against itself, whereas Canada, for example, could not do so. There would be similar opposition among the other smaller Powers, and especially, perhaps, in Latin America. The American reply was that without a provision of this kind it would be difficult or impossible to get the plan through

<sup>1</sup> This chapter deals only with the main issues at the Conference.

<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office, on receiving the American proposals on July 18, had found them similar in essentials to the British proposals. At the informal Anglo-American talks Sir A. Cadogan suggested that—if the Russians agreed—the American proposals might be taken as the basis of the discussions at the Conference.

the Senate. The press, however, had published on August 16 a statement by Governor Dewey<sup>1</sup> attacking a dictatorship of the four Powers, and suggesting that something of the kind was implied in the American plan. Sir A. Cadogan therefore thought that the American Delegation might bring forward other proposals.

On August 29—a week after the opening of the Conference—Sir A. Cadogan reported that the American Delegation was now in favour of the proposal that parties to a dispute, whether or not they were Great Powers, should not vote on it. The Russians, on the other hand, insisted that the rule concerning the unanimity of the permanent Members should include cases in which one or more of them was involved in a dispute.<sup>2</sup> Sir A. Cadogan thought that the American decision was a surprise to the Russian Delegation.

Mr. Eden telegraphed to Sir A. Cadogan on September 6 that we could not accept the Russian view. Sir A. Cadogan pointed out to M. Gromyko that it would be useless for the British and United States Governments to support this view, since no other Government would do so, and there would thus be no Organisation. Mr. Gromyko however, 'remained immovable'; Sir A. Cadogan doubted whether he really understood the British and American arguments. Since M. Gromyko was also unmoved by the President, Mr. Hull, and Mr. Stettinius, Sir A. Cadogan proposed that Sir A. Clark Kerr should raise the matter with M. Molotov. The United States Government agreed that Mr. Harriman should support Sir A. Clark Kerr.

On September 13, however, M. Gromyko said that the Soviet Government had 'finally and unalterably' decided that they could accept nothing short of unanimity. President Roosevelt had sent a message to Stalin that American opinion would not agree to a plan of international organisation which violated the principle that parties to a dispute did not vote on it. Stalin's reply was that the understanding reached at Teheran implied the unanimity of the four leading Powers on all questions, including those directly relating to one of them.<sup>3</sup> Such unanimity presupposed that there were no mutual suspicions among the leading Powers. The Soviet Union could not

<sup>1</sup> Governor Thomas E. Dewey was the Republican candidate in the Presidential election.

<sup>2</sup> The three Powers were agreed that in all questions relating to action against aggression a majority (whether two-thirds or simple) should include the votes of all the Permanent Members. The issue was therefore whether the parties to a dispute, and, in particular, the Permanent Members, should give a vote. If a Permanent Member did not vote, the unanimity of the other Permanent Members would still be required.

<sup>3</sup> No general agreement was reached, and no general discussion took place on a World Security Organisation at the Teheran Conference. The President, in conversation with Stalin, gave his views on the subject, and Stalin, at that time, doubted whether the other Powers would accept the President's idea of a four-Power policing of the world or accept China as one of the enforcing authorities. Stalin, however, may have assumed, from the President's emphasis on four-Power agreement, that he would regard unanimity as an essential condition of action. See also Churchill, V, 320-1.

ignore 'the presence of certain absurd prejudices' which often hindered an 'objective attitude towards the U.S.S.R.' M. Molotov, in answer to Sir A. Clark Kerr, also said that any departure from the principle of unanimity would merely strengthen the 'wild prejudices' in 'certain quarters' against the U.S.S.R.

Meanwhile Sir A. Cadogan had asked Mr. Jebb to put forward, hypothetically, to the Russians a proposal that a Great Power should forego the right of veto during the earlier stages in the settlement of a dispute. Thus a Great Power would not be able to block investigation by the Council, or the formulation of recommendations about a settlement. On the other hand a Great Power could use its veto to block (i) the determination by the Council that a threat to security existed, and (ii) any enforcement of the Council's recommendations. Sir A. Cadogan thought that the smaller Powers would not like this plan, but that they might be brought to accept it, since it would be possible under it at least to find out the attitude of world opinion towards a dispute. Mr. Attlee and Lord Cranborne (to whom Sir A. Cadogan had reported this proposal) telegraphed to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden at Quebec that they thought it better not to accept the proposal, but to have a 'show-down' with the Russians. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden agreed. The Russians, however, on September 17 rejected the proposal; hence nothing more was said about it for the time. On September 18 Mr. Stettinius explained that the United States Government wanted to bring the conversations to a close as soon as possible, and, after holding discussions with the Chinese, to issue a statement mentioning the points of agreement, and leaving blank the section on voting in the Council. Further discussion would take place on this section, and proposals would be submitted to a United Nations Conference.

It was clear, however, that agreement would not be reached without a meeting of the three Great Powers. Moreover the American military authorities appeared to be arguing that the Russian plan was in the interest of the United States.<sup>1</sup> If the Americans changed their views, the British Government would not find it easy to maintain their objections to a compromise on the lines of Sir A. Cadogan's proposal. The Prime Minister himself was also less certain. He was much influenced by a message of September 20 from Field-Marshal Smuts.<sup>2</sup> Field-Marshal Smuts said that at first he had thought the Russian view absurd, but that he was changing his mind. The Russians regarded the matter as involving the honour and standing of their country among the Allies. They asked whether they were to be trusted

<sup>1</sup> It is not possible from the evidence in the British records to say how far the American military view was influenced by a wish not to lose the chance of Russian cooperation in the war against Japan.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this message, see Churchill, VI, 183-4.

and treated as equals; a misunderstanding on this critical matter might lead them to become even more grasping. If Russia were not included in a World Organisation, she would become 'the power centre of another group'; we should then 'be heading towards a third World War.' Field-Marshal Smuts thought therefore that the smaller Powers should make a concession to Russian *amour-propre* and that they should not insist on a theoretical equality of status. Furthermore unanimity among the Great Powers, at least for the years immediately after the war, would 'render it impossible for Russia to embark on courses not approved of by the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom. A brake like unanimity may not be so bad a thing to have where people are drunk with new-won power.'

The Prime Minister told Mr. Eden that he agreed with Field-Marshal Smuts, and that no further progress could be made on 'this dangerous path' until a meeting between the three Heads of Government. The President took the same view about a tripartite meeting, and, indeed, asked Mr. Churchill not to raise the question of voting during his forthcoming visit to Moscow.<sup>1</sup> The agreed recommendations of the Conference were published on October 9.<sup>2</sup> Sir A. Cadogan had suggested that the communiqué accompanying them should include a paragraph stating that the three (or four) Governments were 'resolved to work together, and with all other Governments jointly engaged in the suppression of the forces that have disturbed the peace of the world, for the future enforcement of the terms of surrender to be imposed on the common enemy.' The purpose of this paragraph was to make it clear that the failure to reach agreement at Dumbarton Oaks did not affect the solidarity of the Powers in carrying on the war and imposing terms on Germany; the reference to working with other Governments was intended to meet criticism that the principal Allied Powers were excluding the smaller Allies from the preparation and enforcement of the terms of surrender.

The Soviet Government, however, objected to the reference to the 'other Governments.' They were reminded that the four-Power declaration at the Moscow Conference of October, 1943, provided that the four Powers would 'consult with one another, and, as the occasion requires, with other Members of the United Nations.' M. Molotov, however, refused to accept the words. The paragraph was therefore omitted from the communiqué.

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the President's telegram, see Churchill, VI, 190-1. For the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow, see above, Chapter XV, section (iii).

<sup>2</sup> The recommendations were published in Great Britain as a White Paper (Cmd. 6560, of 1944).



## (iv)

*Sir A. Cadogan's memorandum of November 22, 1944, suggesting possible compromise proposals: President Roosevelt's compromise plan: decision of the War Cabinet to support the President's plan: Russian demand for the separate representation of each of the constituent Republics of the U.S.S.R.*

Since Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden did not discuss the voting issue during their visit to Moscow, the question remained for some time in suspense while the three Heads of Government were arranging a meeting. The Foreign Office meanwhile was considering whether we should make concessions to the Russians, and if so, what these concessions should be.<sup>1</sup> Sir A. Cadogan drew up a memorandum which was circulated to the Armistice and Post-War Committee on November 22. He thought that we were right in arguing that the World Organisation would not get the full cooperation of the secondary States if a single Great Power could use a veto to frustrate the purpose for which this Organisation had been established. We could not be sure, however, that the Americans would continue to support us. There was a conflict of view in the United States between those who were opposed to a 'four-Power domination' of the world and those who regarded the Great Power veto as a safeguard against a possible 'line-up' of the European and even of the Latin-American countries against the United States. The President and Mr. Hull were also most anxious to get a World Organisation, and the President in particular had set himself to secure Russia as a working partner.

If our view were not accepted at the meeting of Heads of Governments, we had three possible compromises open to us. (i) We could suggest once more that the permanent Members of the Council should forego the right of veto in the earlier stages of the settlement of disputes.<sup>2</sup> (ii) We could draw up the procedure for voting on the Anglo-American plan, and allow a permanent Member party to a dispute

<sup>1</sup> In a memorandum circulated, at the request of the Prime Minister, to the War Cabinet on October 7 Sir S. Cripps argued in favour of the Russian thesis. He said that the consent of all five Powers (Sir S. Cripps was including France) was essential to the acceptance of a decision by the Council. All five Powers need not agree that a decision was right, but they must give their consent to the action arising out of it. A parliamentary minority in Great Britain would not consent to a decision unless it had been able to express an opinion and vote on the matter. The only chance of obtaining consent to decisions on the Council was that all its members should have a right to vote even when their own conduct was being called in question. Sir A. Cadogan pointed out that the issue with the Russians was not whether a party to a dispute should have a vote in deciding the dispute, but whether this vote should be a veto. Since unanimity of the Great Powers was required for all important decisions, a negative vote by a Great Power was equivalent to a veto, whereas a smaller Power party to a dispute had no such right of veto. The Soviet plan meant setting up two different systems—one for the Great Powers, and the other for the smaller Powers. This division could not be reconciled with the promise of 'sovereign equality' in the four-Power Declaration.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the plan which Sir A. Cadogan had proposed hypothetically to the Russians, and which they—and the British Ministers—had rejected.



not to accept this procedure, but to submit the case of the Council as a 'conciliation body.' The Council would then try to find a solution in the presence of the Great Power and the other party or parties concerned. There would be no voting and no sanctions. (iii) We could allow a Great Power to demand that the Council, as such, should not deal with a dispute, but that a special meeting of the permanent Members should be called to consider the dispute in the presence of the parties concerned. The meeting would attempt to conciliate the parties, but would otherwise take no action.

Sir A. Cadogan thought the first of these plans better than the second, and the second better than the third. If the Soviet Government rejected all of them, we should refuse our consent to the circulation of any agreed proposals to the United Nations until we had given further consideration to the matter and had consulted the Dominions.<sup>1</sup>

On December 5 the President telegraphed his views to the Prime Minister, and said that he was also taking up the question with Stalin.<sup>2</sup> The President's telegram was not altogether clear,<sup>3</sup> but his general proposal was on the lines of the compromise which Sir A. Cadogan had proposed at the Conference and brought forward again in his paper of November 22. The President wanted to maintain the unanimity rule in all decisions relating to the determination of a threat to peace or to action for the removal of such a threat or for the suppression of aggression. On the other hand the permanent Members were not to exercise a veto in such judicial or quasi-judicial procedure as the Organisation might employ in promoting the voluntary peaceful settlement of disputes.

The Prime Minister was now inclined to accept the Russian thesis,<sup>4</sup> as such, but he agreed with Mr. Eden that we should consult the Dominions, and also ask the Armistice and Post-War Committee to give their views.<sup>5</sup> The Committee reported in

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after Sir A. Cadogan had written his paper there was some evidence that the Russians might agree to a compromise. M. Sobolev (a member of the Soviet Embassy in London) told Mr. Jebb on November 24 that the Soviet Government were likely to insist only that all decisions on the Council should be unanimous; they did not want to prevent the discussion of disputes to which a Great Power was a party. Mr. Jebb mentioned the compromise proposal put forward by Sir A. Cadogan at Dumbarton Oaks. M. Sobolev made no direct response, but did not appear to consider a compromise out of the question.

<sup>2</sup> The President sent his message to Stalin without waiting for a reply from the Prime Minister, although he had earlier told Mr. Churchill that the matter should await discussion at the meeting of Heads of Governments, and that he did not want Mr. Churchill to raise it during his visit to Moscow.

<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister asked Mr. Eden on December 6 to give him a 'short explanation' of what the President 'really meant.'

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Churchill thought that there was no hurry about a decision. He noted on December 6—ten days before the opening of the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes—that 'all these attempts to settle the world while we are struggling with the enemy seem to me most injurious.'

<sup>5</sup> On December 26 Lord Halifax reported that, according to Mr. Stettinius, the Russians were likely to accept the President's compromise. In fact, on December 27 they rejected it.

favour of the compromise. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed on January 13 to tell Mr. Stettinius that we would accept the President's proposal. On hearing, however, on January 16, 1945, that the Russians disliked the proposal, though they were ready to discuss it, Mr. Churchill was unwilling to send a message to the President about it, since he did not want to 'take sides' against the Russian view. The Foreign Office thought that we should support the President in any pressure on the Russians; Mr. Churchill would not go beyond saying that he would agree to the compromise if the Russians did so, but that he would not fight a stiff battle with them on the subject. 'The only hope for the world is the agreement of the three Great Powers. If they quarrel, our children are undone.'

The President told Lord Halifax on January 17 that he hoped to 'horse trade' concessions to the Russians on the question of voting against the Russian claim for separate representation on the United Nations for each of the sixteen constituent Republics of the U.S.S.R. This claim—put forward on August 29—had been rejected sharply by the President and Mr. Hull,<sup>1</sup> and was temporarily withdrawn, though the Russians had said that they would bring it forward again later. The Foreign Office considered that, if the question were raised, we should leave the United States to deal with it, and say that, since the United States would not otherwise join the Organisation, we felt bound to support them in the absence of positive evidence that the sixteen Republics had any real independence. We were however willing to accept a compromise which did not exclude India.<sup>2</sup> The War Cabinet agreed with this recommendation.

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<sup>1</sup> The constitution of the U.S.S.R. had been amended on February 1, 1944, in order to allow each Republic of the Union to enter into direct relations with foreign States, conclude agreements with them, and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives. In fact these constituent Republics had not the slightest opportunity of exercising any separate control of foreign policy.

<sup>2</sup> The position of India was difficult since on paper the Soviet Republics had a greater autonomy in matters of foreign affairs.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### Proposals for western defence: the formulation of British policy in 1944 with regard to the treatment of Germany after the war

#### (i)

*M. Spaak's proposals for western regional defence: the Prime Minister's objections to M. Spaak's proposals.*

IN addition to the Prime Minister's proposals for a United States of Europe, or at all events, a Council of Europe, other plans were suggested for western Europe by M. Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, and supported by the Norwegian, Dutch, and Belgian Governments. M. Spaak was particularly in favour of a western *bloc*, extending from Norway to the Iberian peninsula, and including Great Britain. Mr. Eden pointed out to him in March, 1944, the danger of establishing two *blocs*—an eastern and a western—each of which after the war might bid for German support; M. Spaak answered that the Russians were already organising a *bloc* in eastern Europe. Mr. Eden had further conversations with M. Spaak and the Dutch and Norwegian Foreign Ministers in July, 1944, on the question of collaboration between their respective countries and the United Kingdom. Mr. Eden said that we still thought it better not to begin discussions about collaboration in any particular part of Europe, and that we felt special need for care because American opinion was strongly against proposals tending to divide the world into *blocs*. We did not yet know whether the United States Senate would accept any European commitments, but they would certainly do so only on the basis of a World Organisation.

The Foreign Office, however, was not opposed to the idea of a western European regional system having as its purpose common defence against the revival of German aggression. Stalin had spoken in favour of our assuming certain defence obligations in western Europe, and a western system might be linked with, and reinforce the Anglo-Soviet treaty. A western regional defence system would strengthen France, ease our own manpower situation, and, as far as Great Britain was concerned, give us greater defence in depth. On the other

hand we might find ourselves involved in the maintenance of land forces on a continental scale.<sup>1</sup>

The recommendations of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference mentioned the possibility of regional arrangements for the maintenance of peace. Sir A. Cadogan also told the United States and Soviet delegations that the British Government were considering closer association with the western European countries. The Foreign Office, therefore, with the approval of the Chiefs of Staff, suggested that conversations might begin at once with France and the Low Countries and, later, with Norway and Denmark, and that the best procedure would be to start with military and technical arrangements rather than to attempt a comprehensive agreement which might have to be modified to accord with the Charter of the World Organisation. It was also important to make clear that the security aimed at was security against Germany.

The Prime Minister, however, was unwilling to open discussions at once. He thought that the smaller States would be liabilities in a scheme of regional defence, and that for the next five or ten years, until a really strong French army was in being, a British undertaking to defend them would be 'contrary to all wisdom and even common prudence. It may well be that the Continent will be able to fire at us, and we at the Continent, and that our island position is damaged to that extent. But with a strong Air Force and adequate naval power the Channel is a tremendous obstacle to invasion by armies and tanks.'<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden therefore did not go beyond generalities in discussions with M. Spaak at the end of November, 1944. During his visit to London M. Spaak gave the Foreign Office a memorandum on 'The organisation of cooperation between Great Britain and Belgium within the framework of a West European Regional Entente.' The Foreign Office thought it desirable to let the Russians know about these proposals. On November 26, therefore, Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to tell M. Molotov that there was much discussion in the British and foreign press about a so-called 'Western European *bloc*.' There was no truth in the reports that we were intending to organise a closely integrated Western European system as a counterpoise to the United States and the U.S.S.R. We should have to consider whether it was desirable to organise a system of regional defence in

<sup>1</sup> The Chiefs of Staff, at the end of July, 1944, agreed generally with the proposal. They realised the importance of not antagonising Russia by giving the appearance of organising a western *bloc* against her; they considered that we also should keep in mind the remote but dangerous possibility of the use of German resources by a hostile Russia. In a despatch of May 30, 1944, Mr. Duff Cooper suggested that we should take precautions against the domination of Europe by Russia, and that the surest precaution would be an alliance of the western democratic Powers. Mr. Eden, in reply to Mr. Duff Cooper, said that, if the Russians came to regard a western alliance as a precautionary measure against themselves, we should drive them into working against us. There would then be no chance of a World Organisation, and no hope of European recovery.

<sup>2</sup> See also above, p. 272.

western Europe against Germany, and various approaches in this sense had been made to us by the smaller States, and, especially, Belgium, but we had not come to any decision, and, in accordance with our policy, would first discuss the matter with the Soviet Government. In any case the World Organisation and the Anglo-Soviet alliance came first in our plans.

Sir A. Clark Kerr reported that M. Molotov said to him that the question of a western *bloc* could not but interest the Soviet Government. Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that our statement was timely, and that M. Molotov had been watching the press reports closely, and had probably exaggerated their importance.

(ii)

*The formulation of British policy with regard to the treatment of Germany: differences of view between the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff on the question of dismemberment: the economic control of Germany.*

A detailed plan for the 'regional' defence of Western Europe against a renewal of German aggression was not possible until the major Allies had decided how much territory they would take from Germany, and what kind of organisation and control they would impose on the territory which remained to her. The European Advisory Commission was working out—though with many delays—the procedure and terms of surrender, but had not developed, as the Foreign Office had hoped, into a kind of forum or centre of discussion of European problems. The War Cabinet indeed had yet to settle their own policy towards Germany, and were unlikely to do so at a time when the attention of the Prime Minister was concentrated on the military situation.

From the early days of May, 1944, to the end of the year the Armistice and Post-War Committee considered, in addition to matters affecting the proposed World Organisation, a number of memoranda on the treatment of Germany after the war. The most important question was that of the dismemberment of the Reich. This question had been referred at the Teheran Conference to a special committee of the three Powers.<sup>1</sup> The British representative on the European Advisory Commission had put it on the agenda of the Commission in January, 1944, but the Soviet representative had asked for a postponement of any discussion; the reason which he gave was the insufficiency of his staff. No discussion had therefore taken place.

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 448.

On June 7 the Foreign Office asked the Chiefs of Staff for their views. The Chiefs of Staff, who were occupied at this time with the course of operations in France, did not reply until September 9, 1944.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the question of dismemberment came into consideration, directly or indirectly in regard to other possible decisions about the future of Germany. Thus early in July, 1944, the Armistice and Post-War Committee discussed a report from an interdepartmental committee on the possibility of a transfer of the German population of East Prussia, Danzig, Upper Silesia, the Sudetenland and other Czechoslovak territory, and areas within the Polish frontiers of 1939. The Committee thought that, although on a long term such transfers might be an advantage to all the countries concerned, the short-term difficulties were so serious that they might cause a German economic collapse. The amount of human suffering would be very great; the migrants would be poor and embittered, and the transfer of persons of a particular nationality from territories long settled by them did not lessen the sentiment of the nation as a whole for the lost territory or the determination to regain it.

Mr. Attlee submitted to the Armistice and Post-War Committee on July 11, 1944, a memorandum on policy towards Germany with special reference to this report. He said that our object in occupying Germany was to ensure that she did not again become a menace to peace. Should we bring about (subject to disarmament and demilitarisation) the restoration of normal conditions in Germany as quickly as possible, and provide her with food and facilities for economic revival, or did we think that Nazi influence and the German cult of war must be rooted out, even if the result were, at first, political and economic confusion? Hitherto we had based our plans on the first alternative. We wanted Germany to be able to provide reparation. We also wanted to lighten the burden of our own occupying forces. We thought the economic revival of Germany essential to the general welfare of Europe. The test of our policy, however, must be not how hardly it would bear on Germany, but how far we could carry it out without harm to ourselves. Mr. Attlee thought that we ought to destroy the German military machine and Nazi system even if our policy produced an internal crisis and subjected the Germans to great hardship. The alternative to this policy would be an occupation lasting perhaps for thirty years and a drastic 're-education,' but neither we nor the Americans would carry through a plan of this kind. Hence we must act at once, and avoid restoring the Prussian landowning class or the controllers of German heavy industry who looked to war, or the fear of war, to provide them with orders.

Mr. Eden commented on this paper in a memorandum of July 19 to the Armistice and Post-War Committee. He agreed with Mr.

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 469-70.

Attlee's general definition of our aims, but said that we were unlikely to obtain our political or economic ends in Germany if we reduced her to chaos. The economic depression had been one of the main factors in the growth of the Nazi party; we must not destroy the Nazis only to put something equally evil and dangerous in their place. Moreover our own troops would not carry out a policy which resulted in the starvation of Germany. The Armistice and Post-War Committee discussed Mr. Attlee's paper and Mr. Eden's comments on July 20. Mr. Attlee wanted the destruction of the 'central machine' of German government. Mr. Eden said that we were working for a maximum of separatism and decentralisation, but we had not decided whether we should use force to prevent a return to a unitary Reich. Mr. Attlee thought that military governments and control organisations always tended to work with what they considered to be the forces of law and order.

Sir W. Strang pointed out that if we did not wish to work through a central German governmental organisation, we should have to change the policy we had put forward on the European Advisory Commission, since our terms of surrender for the Germans and our machinery of control assumed a central German government. The discussion was continued a week later. Mr. Eden said that there were two points of fundamental importance; the dismemberment of Germany, and the dissolution of the central machinery of government. Mr. Eden hoped for dismemberment brought about from within, but was less sure that we should be prudent otherwise to enforce it. We ought not to decide to break up the central government until we knew, e.g. whether we could make three-Power control effective without a central German authority.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of August, 1944, the Economic and Industrial Planning Staff produced a report<sup>2</sup> on the question of the economic obligations to be imposed on Germany. They considered that the measures necessary to avoid a recurrence of German aggression might conflict with our proposals to exact reparation. We had also to consider how far our restrictive measures would be carried out after our period of occupation (we should not need them during the occupation). The longer the period of control, the greater the permanent effects; a ten-year period was the minimum necessary to secure any lasting result. In a memorandum to the Armistice and Post-War Committee on this

<sup>1</sup> The Armistice and Post-War Committee had already (July 10) asked the Armistice Terms and Civil Affairs Committee to report on what might happen if there were no formal surrender by a German Government, and no central administration. (This latter committee was composed of officials under the chairmanship of Sir F. Bovenschen, Joint Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War.)

<sup>2</sup> The Economic and Industrial Planning Staff had been set up in February, 1944, to consider the economic aspects of the German armistice terms. The Foreign Office had asked them to examine the question of dismemberment. The Secretary of State hoped to combine in a single paper the various reports on the subject.



report Mr. Eden said that the United States Government wanted to discuss with us and with the Russians questions of reparation and re-starting German trade. These talks ought to cover the whole economic field, and our representative might take the E.I.P.S. report as a basis of discussion. The Armistice and Post-War Committee considered on August 31 the general issues in the report, i.e. whether we should work for an efficient and highly industrialised Germany, or a Germany industrially crippled. The Committee thought that we might destroy only a relatively small number of industrial activities vital for war and also difficult to conceal. The Committee also discussed on August 31 a telegram from General Eisenhower to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in which he raised the question of a possible collapse of Germany, the disappearance of all central authority, and an economic breakdown. (A situation of this kind did not seem unlikely at the end of August, 1944.) During the discussion of this telegram it was suggested that we ought not to assume that we should deal with a central government, and that we should organise our administration on a local basis. The Committee recorded their opinion in favour of dismemberment, but agreed to defer a decision until they had received a report on the question from the Foreign Office.

The Committee considered again on September 21 the question of the machinery of control in Germany. Sir W. Strang said that he had spoken at the European Advisory Commission about the possibility that there might be no central authority in Germany through which to exercise control, and also that the Allies might decide to dismember the country. The Russian and American representatives thought, however, that we must start with the assumption that a central government existed, and that at all events we should begin by using it. The Prime Minister had also taken this view at the Quebec Conference. Mr. Attlee repeated that we ought to have at least the intention of decentralisation, even if we began by using a central organisation. The Armistice Terms and Civil Affairs Committee reported on October 20 that, if there were no formal surrender by a German government, we should have to re-establish some central administrative authority, if only as an interim measure. The regional administrative machinery in Germany could not do the work done hitherto by the central administration. Under the Nazis many powers previously exercised by the States had been transferred to the central government. The Nazi 'planned economy' had been imposed from the centre, and unless Germany were to fall into economic confusion, we should have to continue these controls, e.g. over agricultural production, raw materials, foreign trade, prices and credit, tariffs, currency and banking. The controls—and taxation—could only be planned centrally. The question therefore was not whether a central administrative machine would be necessary, but whether the machine

would be an Allied governing authority or a German authority under Allied control. If the Allies took over direct control, they would find dismemberment easier, but they would be committing themselves to an unlimited responsibility. A tripartite governing authority of foreigners of different nationalities could not administer a country of 60-70 million people. Moreover the discussions on the European Advisory Commission had shewn that the Americans and Russians wanted to control but not to administer Germany. The Committee were convinced by these arguments at least to the point of agreeing that the establishment of an Allied governing authority would be extremely difficult, and that the use of a central German authority under Allied control would be more suitable.

Meanwhile, on September 20, Mr. Eden had submitted to the Armistice and Post-War Committee a memorandum on dismemberment. The memorandum took into account the views of the Chiefs of Staff received on September 9. The Chiefs of Staff considered, on balance, that the dismemberment of Germany would be to our advantage in relation to the prevention of German rearmament and renewed aggression. They also regarded it as an insurance against the possibility of a hostile U.S.S.R. We had to guard against a Russo-German combination, and, in the event of Russian hostility, we should need German help. The Russians would be unlikely to allow the rearmament of a united Germany unless they could dominate it after it was rearmed. We were therefore unlikely to receive help from a united Germany. Hence our interests would be better served by dismemberment since we might be able to bring at least north-west, and possibly also south Germany within the orbit of a western European group.

The general conclusions of the Foreign Office memorandum, on the other hand, were that a policy of dismemberment would not be to our advantage. The Germans would try to evade it, and British and American opinion would be likely to come to regard it as an injustice. The Foreign Office regarded as fantastic and dangerous the argument of the Chiefs of Staff that, if necessary, we could revise our policy towards Germany, and use a part of the country against a combination of Russia—the strongest military Power in Europe—and the East Germans. Our policy was to preserve the unity and collaboration of the United Nations. If we made our plans with the idea that Germany might serve as part of an anti-Soviet *bloc*, we should destroy any hope of preserving the Anglo-Soviet alliance, and soon find ourselves relaxing disarmament and other measures which we regarded as necessary to prevent future German aggression. If the Russians

wanted dismemberment, they might suspect our opposition to it, but we ought none the less to oppose it.

In a covering letter introducing the memorandum Mr. Eden explained that the rejection of a policy of dismemberment did not mean leaving Germany in its present centralised state. We might consider the French plan for a special régime in Rheno-Westphalia which would remove from a central German authority the control over German basic industries.<sup>1</sup> A return to a confederate or federal system, or even a system of decentralisation would diminish the authority of the central government. In any case we could secure the dissolution of Prussia.

The Chiefs of Staff replied to the Foreign Office memorandum that, although they hoped for the maintenance of friendship with Russia, and for the success of the World Security Organisation, they were bound to take into account the possibility that neither hope might be fulfilled, and that we might have to deal with an expansionist and, perhaps, an aggressive Russia. The Foreign Office answered that the possibility of war with the U.S.S.R. could not be excluded but that such an event was unlikely for a number of years, and that meantime, without sacrificing British interests, we should try to maintain friendly relations with the Russians. We could not maintain such relations if the Russians thought that we were also trying to build up a *bloc* against them, and that we intended to combine with Germany, or parts of Germany in this policy. The Chiefs of Staff, at a meeting with Mr. Eden on October 4, repeated that they were bound to examine the question of the dismemberment of Germany from every angle of view, and that they could not exclude the possibility that the World Organisation might break down owing to differences with Russia and that we might be faced with a unitary Germany dominated by, or acting in collaboration with Russia. Mr. Eden repeated the Foreign Office view. The Chiefs of Staff finally agreed that they and the Foreign Office should study the question again, and that, until the War Cabinet had given directions in the matter, no ruling could be laid down about the assumptions to be made with regard to Russian policy after the war.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This plan had been brought before the British Government in August, 1944. The area in question included the Ruhr, the districts around Frankfurt and Mannheim and the Black Forest. The area would remain German in administration but would be brought under permanent international control, and linked economically with the West. The Foreign Office thought that the plan, which, in fact, involved separation of the area from the rest of Germany, while maintaining its full economic productivity, would succeed, like other similar plans, only as long as the Allies maintained their will to enforce their control, and to prevent the reunion of the separated area with Germany.

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister, on hearing that the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff had different views on the question of dismemberment, noted that President Roosevelt and Stalin went even further than he was inclined to go in the matter.

## (iii)

*Acceptance by President Roosevelt and the Prime Minister of Mr. Morgenthau's plan<sup>1</sup> for the destruction of German industry in the Ruhr and Saar: abandonment of the plan: lack of Allied agreement at the end of 1944 on the treatment of Germany.*

Towards the end of August, 1944, the Foreign Office received information that Mr. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., United States Secretary of the Treasury, was talking about the necessity for a very severe treatment of Germany after the war, and was complaining that Americans in London were planning to rebuild the German economy after the war and taking little account of the President's plans for dismemberment. Lord Halifax confirmed these reports in a telegram of September 2 that a committee had been set up to consider (i) dismemberment, (ii) the trial and punishment of the leading Nazis, (iii) the desirability of an attempt to maintain or reestablish the German economy, (iv) the internationalisation of the Ruhr. Mr. Morgenthau was urging that a severe inflation, with the consequences of disruption and distress, might have a salutary effect on the Germans. Lord Halifax said that the Americans would raise these questions at the Quebec Conference.

The Secretary of State hoped that Mr. Churchill would try to persuade the President that Mr. Morgenthau's views were wrong, and that a starving and bankrupt Germany would not be in British or any European interests. The War Cabinet agreed on September 11 that Mr. Eden should telegraph to the Prime Minister that there was some evidence of the conversion of the President to a policy of 'letting chaos have its way' in Germany. A policy of this kind was not 'hard'; it was merely inefficient. It would mean inflation, with gains to a few profiteers, and suffering for the middle and working classes. We should be associated, not with just retribution, but with avoidable and purposeless suffering. There would be no chance of getting an adequate German contribution for the reconstruction of Europe; we might even have to send supplies into Germany, if only because our occupying forces would not tolerate the starvation of children.<sup>2</sup>

This telegram was sent on September 14 to Mr. Eden (who had left for Quebec on the previous night) for transmission to the Prime Minister. Meanwhile on September 12 Lord Halifax had reported a conversation in which Mr. Hopkins had said to Sir R. I. Campbell that it might be better not to internationalise the Ruhr, but to deprive

<sup>1</sup> Later material (on the American side) about the origins of the 'Morgenthau plan' falls outside the scope of this *History*. I have limited myself here, as in other chapters, to the facts known to the Foreign Office at the time.

<sup>2</sup> The draft of this telegram had been sent to a number of Ministers, including Mr. Attlee, Sir J. Anderson, and Mr. Bevin, for their approval.

Germany of her steel industry by removing her manufacturing plant, possibly to Belgium and the United Kingdom, and forbidding her to replace it.

On September 15 the Prime Minister reported to Mr. Attlee, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the War Cabinet that he and Lord Cherwell,<sup>1</sup> after discussing British munition and other supplies, had been told by the President and Mr. Morgenthau of their plan for expanding British export trade to meet the loss of foreign investments. They proposed a complete dismantling of the steel industries of the Ruhr and the Saar. The Russians would claim most of the machinery for the repair of their own plants. An international trusteeship would be necessary to keep these potential centres of armament manufacture out of action for many years to come. The result would be to emphasise the pastoral character of German life; the goods previously supplied from these German centres—to the amount of £300–400,000,000 a year—would be provided to a large extent by Great Britain. The Prime Minister said in his telegram that at first he was taken aback by the proposal, but that he considered the argument about disarming Germany to be decisive; the beneficial consequences to Great Britain followed naturally.

The Prime Minister did not think it necessary to bring Mr. Eden into the discussions or to ask for the views of the Foreign Office. He and the President therefore initialled on September 15 a document stating that 'the ease with which the metallurgical, chemical and electric industries in Germany can be converted from Peace to War has already been impressed upon us by bitter experience. It must also be remembered that the Germans have devastated a large portion of the industries of Russia and of other neighbouring Allies, and it is only in accordance with justice that these injured countries should be entitled to remove the machinery they required in order to repair the losses they have suffered. The industries referred to in the Ruhr and in the Saar would therefore be necessarily put out of action and closed down.... This programme for eliminating the war-making industries on the Ruhr and in the Saar is looking forward to converting Germany into a country primarily agricultural and pastoral in its character.'<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister telegraphed the text of this document to Mr. Attlee and the Chancellor of the Exchequer on September 15. They replied on September 16 with the warmest congratulations on the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Cherwell, Paymaster General, was with the Prime Minister at Quebec.

<sup>2</sup> The President initialled this document: 'O.K. F.D.R.' The Prime Minister initialled it: 'W.S.C.' There is no material in the British archives on the discussion of the 'Morgenthau plan' between the Prime Minister and the President, or subsequently between the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden. Mr. Hull, in his *Memoirs* (II, 1614–15), gives a short account of the acceptance of the plan, and of Mr. Eden's objection to it.

arrangements made by the Prime Minister and Lord Cherwell. The arrangements they had in mind were those to which the Americans had agreed for mutual Lend-Lease during the period between surrender of Germany and the surrender of Japan,<sup>1</sup> but they did not raise any question about the practicability of 'converting Germany into a country primarily agricultural and pastoral in its character.' On September 18, after Mr. Eden had returned from Quebec, and had given the War Cabinet an account of the discussions, Mr. Attlee repeated his congratulations in another telegram to the Prime Minister. It is unlikely that any reference was intended in either of these telegrams to Mr. Morgenthau's plan and to the document signed by the President and the Prime Minister. The earlier message delivered through Mr. Eden had already expressed the views of the War Cabinet about the plan and Mr. Eden had made his own opinion clear to Mr. Churchill at Quebec.

Mr. Attlee indeed raised the matter at the meeting of the Armistice and Post-War Committee; he said that the Prime Minister had asked for the examination of the proposals. The Committee were doubtful of them, and sent them to the E.I.P.S. for a report. This report was not received until the latter part of December, and was then most unfavourable.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile the President himself seems to have regarded his acceptance of the plan as a mistake. The general facts about it were mentioned in the American press on September 21 and strongly criticised. The President did not take the plan further; on October 20 he told Mr. Hull that it was undesirable to decide upon 'detailed plans for a country which we do not yet occupy.'

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hull has suggested that this large offer of assistance was in return for the British acceptance of the 'Morgenthau plan.' There is no evidence in the British sources that the Prime Minister regarded it in this light. Mr. Hull (*id. ib.*) himself says that Mr. Morgenthau denied any connexion between the Prime Minister's acceptance of the plan, and the offer to continue the Lend-Lease arrangements. For the discussion on these arrangements, see R. S. Sayers, *op. cit.*, ch. XV, section (ii).

<sup>2</sup> The conclusions were that the effect of the plan would be to deprive, directly and indirectly, some 2 million out of 6½ million pre-war working population of their livelihood. Agriculture in the area was already on an intensive basis and could not absorb much additional labour. In any case employment would also have to be found for some 3-5 million workers from German territory ceded in the east. The industries of the Ruhr and Saar provided about 60 per cent of German exports. Hence there might well be no means of getting reparation, and for some time Germany might require imports for which she would be unable to pay. The effects on British commercial interests would be on the whole favourable, though less so than was commonly supposed. The destruction of German productive power would impoverish the countries with whom Germany traded. We might get an increased share in the former foreign markets of Germany, but our imports to Germany would be less and we might suffer losses in the increased competition from permitted German industries, especially coal. The net advantage in a visible balance of trade to us would probably be nearer £30 million a year than the £300-400 millions which had been suggested. On invisible account we should not receive any reparation except in the transfer of plant, or any sums in respect of our large investments in Germany.

The Foreign Office agreed with this report, and noted also that the area of Germany which would be most affected was in the British zone of occupation, and that we should have to deal with the very serious additional problem of unemployment.

Mr. Eden considered that we need do nothing more about the proposals unless the President raised them again.



Mr. Morgenthau, however, was not silenced by the defeat of his plan. On November 5 Lord Cherwell sent to the Prime Minister a memorandum which Mr. Morgenthau wished him to see. This memorandum criticised very strongly what Mr. Morgenthau called the British 'draft of Policy Directive for Germany.'<sup>1</sup> Lord Cherwell wrote that, in general, he thought that we should adopt an American draft expressing Mr. Morgenthau's views. The Prime Minister sent the memorandum to Mr. Eden and General Ismay (for the Chiefs of Staff Committee) with the comment that he had not seen the British draft, but that Mr. Morgenthau's criticism of it seemed 'very cogent.' The Foreign Office—and the War Office—however, regarded the criticisms as ill-founded and impertinent, and outside the concern of the United States Secretary of the Treasury.<sup>2</sup>

The future of Germany was discussed in a general way during the visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Moscow in October, 1944. At the first meeting Stalin asked the Prime Minister what he thought of Mr. Morgenthau's plan. The Prime Minister gave no direct answer, but said that the President and Mr. Morgenthau were not very happy about the reception of the plan. Mr. Churchill suggested that M. Molotov, Mr. Eden, and Mr. Harriman should talk over the German question, and give a general survey of the various proposals.

The British records of the meetings do not contain an account of any such conversation or survey, but at the final session Stalin again raised the subject. Stalin was, as before, in favour of dismemberment. Mr. Eden said that the British Government had not yet come to any conclusion.<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister thought that Prussia and the Prussian military caste were the 'root of the evil.' He suggested the isolation of Prussia, and the control of the Ruhr and the Saar. We should have first to take away all the machinery and machine tools needed by the U.S.S.R., Belgium, France, and the Netherlands (Mr. Churchill explained that this was Mr. Morgenthau's policy). As a debtor nation Great Britain would need to increase her exports after the war; the Russian intention to take away machinery was thus in harmony with British interests in filling the gap which Germany would leave.

The Secretary of State now thought it essential that the War Cabinet

<sup>1</sup> The draft was in fact a handbook in which, for convenience, thirty-six directives on various aspects of the control of Germany were bound together. These directives, which had been produced over a period of nine months, had been considered in detail by the Armistice and Post-War Committee and the Armistice and Civil Affairs Committee, and had been communicated to the American and Russian members of the European Advisory Commission.

<sup>2</sup> General Ismay did not submit the memorandum to the Chiefs of Staff.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Eden asked the Russians to speed up the work of the European Advisory Committee. See below, pp. 476-8.



should make up their minds at least on the question of dismemberment. He therefore circulated to the Armistice and Post-War Committee on November 27 a Foreign Office memorandum on 'Confederation, Federation, and Decentralization of the German State and the Dismemberment of Prussia.' This paper repeated the views expressed in earlier memoranda that constitutional arrangements alone could not give us security against Germany, and that we should be unable to maintain an enforced dismemberment against the strong wish of the Germans for unity. The objections to decentralisation and a return to federalism were much less serious. In any case we should have to break up Prussia, though the connexion between Prussia and National Socialism had been exaggerated, especially by German *émigrés* who had been trying to 'sidetrack' indignation against Germany as a whole. Munich was the capital of the National Socialist Movement, and the Prussian Government which had been suppressed in 1932 was democratic. On the other hand Prussia had been the centre of German militarism and its dissolution by the Allies would appear as a strong and symbolic action.<sup>1</sup>

In circulating this paper to the Armistice and Post-War Committee Mr. Eden said that he would submit later another memorandum on dismemberment. This memorandum was not submitted before the Yalta Conference, partly because there was still no agreement between the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff. Mr. Eden himself was still undecided; he noted on a redraft of the Foreign Office memorandum that dismemberment would raise 'grave political as well as practical issues to which an answer would have to be found before we could support such a policy.' The Prime Minister thought it better to reserve any decision until after the matter had been discussed at the Yalta Conference.<sup>2</sup> The European Advisory

<sup>1</sup> In view of the importance given especially by the Labour Ministers to the destruction of the economic position of the Junkers, the Armistice and Post-War Committee had asked the Foreign Office on July 20, 1944, to report generally on plans for the break up of the great landed estates in Germany. The Foreign Office submitted a report on December 15. The report estimated that if all estates of 250 acres or over in private or public ownership existing in Germany in 1937 were broken up, 150,000 peasant families could be settled on them. Eighty per cent of these large estates were in the proposed Soviet zone of occupation, including East Prussia and Silesia. If Germany lost East Prussia and Upper Silesia, the number of possible holdings would be reduced to about 110,000, and, if she lost all territory east of the Oder, the number would fall to about 82,000. The ultimate economic consequences of a break-up would be advantageous, but the difficulties of a transitional period would be serious, and—assuming 110,000 holdings—would cost about R.M. 7000 million over five years, i.e. about a quarter of the net annual German national savings at a time when—apart from reparation—other forms of capital investment would be making heavy demands on German resources. We could not be sure that the break-up of the great estates would be politically much to our advantage. Other classes in Germany had supported Hitler as enthusiastically as the landowning class; we had no certainty that the elimination of the Junkers would mean the control of policy by less aggressively minded Germans. The report suggested that, if the Soviet Government were strongly in favour of the break-up of the large estates, we should support them. Otherwise we should leave the Germans to do as they chose.

<sup>2</sup> For a general statement, on January 4, 1945, to Mr. Eden by the Prime Minister on the treatment of Germany, see Churchill, VI, 305-6.

Commission had also postponed a discussion. Hence at the beginning of 1945 there was no agreed policy among the Allies whether or not to dismember Germany, and the British Government had not made up their minds on the matter.

### Note to Section (iii)

#### *The work of the European Advisory Commission*

The European Advisory Commission held its first formal session on January 14, 1944.<sup>1</sup> The first business was the draft of an Instrument of Surrender to be accepted unconditionally by Germany. Each delegation submitted a draft Instrument. The British draft was a comprehensive document of some seventy articles, including military, political and economic provisions covering generally a situation in which the Allies would have to assume powers going beyond those normally exercised by a Commander-in-Chief on occupied territory, but in which at the time of surrender there would be some central German governmental authority competent to sign and execute the terms. The Soviet draft was shorter, and aimed primarily at securing a military surrender and the destruction of the German military machine; the non-military requirements of the Allies were left for subsequent presentation which the Germans were bound to accept. The American draft was still shorter, and in the most general terms. It gave the Allies unlimited powers, and spoke of the 'conquest' and 'governing' of Germany. Sir W. Strang reported on March 29 that there was a deadlock between the Russians and the Americans; the latter would not accept the Russian proposal to include in the Instrument a number of specific military provisions, while the Russians thought that there was some risk of the Germans refusing to sign the far-reaching 'general' American terms. Neither the Russians nor the Americans would accept the British draft. After much delay, the Commission agreed to proposals from Sir W. Strang for a compromise. The Instrument of Surrender would consist of certain specific military clauses (with some general provisions allowing the Commander-in-Chief to impose further requirements) and would be accompanied by a list of provisions, on the lines of the comprehensive British draft, to be imposed by proclamation or order immediately after the surrender had taken place.

The Commission was thus able to submit to the three Governments on July 26, 1944, a Draft Instrument of Surrender. The draft proclamations and orders had not been completed at the time of the German surrender.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Most of the work of the Commission was in fact done at informal meetings of the heads of delegations (Sir W. Strang, Mr. Winant, M. Gusev, and later, M. Massigli).

<sup>2</sup> For some time before the German unconditional surrender it was clear that there would not be any German Government or central civilian authority capable of signing and executing the Instrument of Surrender, and that the Allies would have to assume supreme authority by unilateral action. The necessary changes in the Instrument were not fully agreed at the time of the surrender. The military surrender was accepted in shortened terms, and the four Allied Commanders-in-Chief later (June 5, 1945) issued a formal declaration, in the terms of the revised Instrument prepared by the Commission, assuming supreme authority on behalf of their respective Governments.

Meanwhile between May and September, 1944, the Commission also drew up plans (later accepted by the three Powers) for the military occupation of Germany in three zones following the recommendations of the Chiefs of Staff<sup>1</sup>; a little later they agreed on plans for the machinery of control. They began in June, 1944, to consider questions dealing with the occupation and control of Austria; discussions were then held up because the Americans were undecided whether they wanted a zone of occupation in Austria. Hence no arrangements had been agreed when the Russians occupied Vienna in mid-April, 1945; the Russians then became much more exigent in their demands, and an agreement was not finally reached until after sharp exchanges between the Prime Minister and President Truman and Stalin.

The Commission produced some twelve agreements for approval by Governments, and was the most successful inter-Allied organisation in working with the Russians, but it did not fulfil the British hope that it might serve as a general clearing-house for three-Power discussions on European problems connected with the ending of hostilities. Sir W. Strang, in a memorandum for the use of Mr. Eden in his conversations with Mr. Stettinius,<sup>2</sup> pointed out that unfortunately the decision to set up the Commission, though supported by the United States Delegation in Moscow, had been coldly received in Washington, particularly by the President and the War Department. Hence the Americans had tended to limit the functions of the Commission; they had refused, for example, to allow it to consider the administration of liberated territories,<sup>3</sup> and had been unwilling for some weeks past to begin discussions on the occupation of Germany.

The Russians also caused delay by refusing to discuss any other question before settling the terms of surrender for Germany. Sir W. Strang suggested a meeting with Mr. Stettinius, Mr. Winant, and M. Gusev to consider the position of the Commission. Mr. Stettinius was most sympathetic, but on April 24 gave Mr. Eden a letter from Mr. Hull stating that the Commission had already enough to do and should not take on additional work; the United States War Department also objected to submitting to it the drafts of the Norwegian, Belgian, and Dutch Civil Affairs agreements.

Mr. Eden complained to Mr. Stettinius that the Americans were not keeping to the directives given to the Commission at the Moscow Conference, and that the Russians therefore regarded it as less authoritative. Mr. Stettinius agreed that the War Department was largely responsible for the American attitude. He promised to send a 'strong telegram' to Washington on the matter. After his return to the United States Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Owing to further discussion between the British and Americans over their respective zones, final agreement was not reached until the Yalta Conference.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 450.

<sup>3</sup> This refusal stultified one of the main objects of the Commission, namely, to secure that certain general European questions should come under three-Power discussion. There was also a risk that it might cause a setback to collaboration between the Western Powers and the U.S.S.R.

Stettinius told Lord Halifax (on May 23) that the United States Administration had certainly gone back on the arrangements agreed in Moscow. He thought that, since the United States Government could be represented on the Commission only at an official level, the President might be afraid that the United Kingdom would take too much of a lead, 'get through solutions which the President might not like, and generally organise Europe on lines of United Kingdom policy. The United Kingdom might thus figure in the eyes of European countries and the world as leaders in Europe of the Anglo-Saxon countries, something which he supposed the President might not relish.' The Foreign Office thought that Mr. Stettinius' explanation was probably right.

After the submission of the Draft Instrument of Surrender to the three Governments at the end of July, 1944, the lack of progress was due mainly to delays and obstruction from the Russian side. On August 8 and again on September 7 Sir A. Clark Kerr wrote to M. Molotov about these delays. Mr. Eden spoke to M. Molotov about them when he was at Moscow in October, and for a time the Russians were less obstructive in their methods, though not less uncompromising in their demands. The improvement, however, was not lasting. In the early summer of 1945 the Foreign Office complained of the unwillingness of the Russian representative to discuss matters affecting the administration of Germany even when the Soviet Government had said that they regarded them as of importance.

## (iv)

*The question of 'unconditional surrender': Foreign Office proposal for a statement to the German people: General Eisenhower's proposal for a statement before 'D-day': the Prime Minister's views on the inexpediency of a statement before a successful landing: President Roosevelt's proposal in November, 1944, for a declaration: the German unconditional surrender.*

The British discussions on the treatment of Germany after the war assumed an unconditional surrender, and took no account of the possibility of bargaining over terms. During the last three years of the war the British Government had no reason to change their attitude towards 'unofficial' German peace overtures.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office continued to suspect that many of the 'offers' were set going by the German secret service which appeared to have made a special study of the tactics of the subject. Neutral countries were favourable ground for these efforts to cause dissension among the Allies in view of the anxiety of the remaining neutrals to see the end of the war before they were forced to take part in it.

The dissident generals and groups of 'moderate' civilians in

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 8, note 1.

Germany wanted to set up a government which would make a compromise peace, but they were unable to get rid of Hitler, and the peace terms regarded by them as essential if they were to get popular support were, as earlier, unacceptable to the Allies.<sup>1</sup> Hence the approaches were met either with complete silence, or, in the case of neutral governments, with the reply that there could be no negotiations until the Nazi Government had been destroyed. On May 8, 1942, Mr. Eden said in a speech that the longer the Germans supported the Hitler régime, the heavier was their responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

The Germans themselves in the early months of 1943 were far from accepting President Roosevelt's formula of unconditional surrender. They could no longer hope for complete victory, but they felt strong enough to hold out in the occupied areas of Europe—outside Russia—until Allied opinion became war-weary, and ready to accept a 'compromise' peace. After the Allied invasion of France this hope was untenable except by those who shared Hitler's delusions about secret weapons or about the chances of dividing the Allies. Even so the Germans hostile to the régime never gave the impression that they had the capacity to overthrow it; their attempt, in July, 1944, was a failure for which they themselves paid a terrible price. After this failure a spontaneous movement strong enough to destroy the régime was hardly probable until the end was at hand through complete military defeat.

In addition to the peace-feelers from German sources, there were also approaches from the European allies of Germany as soon as they realised that they were committed to the losing side. A number of these approaches came from Italy. The Foreign Office did not put much value upon them. They doubted whether the Italians would—or could—make a separate peace until the Germans were so much weakened that they were unable to control Italy, and a national leader had appeared with sufficient strength to displace Mussolini.<sup>3</sup> During 1943 approaches of a serious kind were made from Hungary.<sup>4</sup> The Foreign Office considered that Hungary had kept a greater degree of independence than the other satellite States; there was a relatively strong opposition on the Left and Right, and the Hungarian leaders had been surprisingly outspoken in their criticism of the

<sup>1</sup> Thus an overture as late as December, 1943, alleged to come from von Papen, suggested that Germany should maintain the *Anschluss* with Austria, and should 'rent' Danzig and the Corridor from Poland.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden added that 'if any section of the German people really wants to see a return to a German State which is based upon respect for law . . . and the rights of the individual, they must understand that no one will believe them until they have taken active steps to rid themselves of their present régime.' This statement of policy, to which, in the circumstances, the British Government had no practical alternative, was repeated almost *verbatim* by Mr. Attlee in answer to a parliamentary question on July 6, 1944. (Parl. Deb., 5th ser., H. of C., vol. 401, col. 1308.)

<sup>3</sup> See also above, p. 225, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> See also above, p. 297, note 1.

Nazis. They had also tried to moderate the persecution of the Jews. On the other hand the Hungarians could hardly be expected to turn against the Germans at a time when the Allies could give them no support. In any case the Germans themselves settled the matter, at least for a time, in March, 1944, by the occupation of Hungary.

In the autumn of 1943, although there were no immediate prospects of the overthrow of the Nazi régime by the Germans themselves, the evidence reaching the Foreign Office shewed that the German people were now deeply concerned at the increasing destruction caused by air raids. The Foreign Office therefore suggested to Mr. Eden, just before the opening of the Teheran Conference, that the Allied leaders might issue a statement warning the Germans of the uselessness of further resistance. The Conference did not put out a statement of this kind, but Mr. Eden understood that Stalin had said to President Roosevelt that the demand for 'unconditional surrender' was bad tactics and that the Allies should work out terms and make them known to the German people. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden thought this a better plan than the Foreign Office proposal. Mr. Eden suggested that the terms should be worked out as soon as possible through the European Advisory Commission. Mr. Hopkins also took this view. On December 17, therefore, the Foreign Office asked the United States and Soviet Governments whether they would be willing to send instructions to this effect to their representatives on the Commission. Lord Halifax, however, telegraphed on December 24 that, according to Mr. Hull, the President did not remember any discussion at Teheran about a statement of terms, and that he was asking Mr. Winant to talk over the matter with the Prime Minister on the latter's return to London.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister himself had become a little uncertain about the expediency of a demand for unconditional surrender. He had noted, on a report of August 10 about a hint from Papen of a German approach,<sup>2</sup> that we need not go on 'uttering the slogan "unconditional surrender"'. 'We did not want to get the Germans 'all fused together in a solid desperate block for whom there is no hope. . . A gradual break-up in Germany must mean a weakening of their resistance, and consequently the saving of hundreds and thousands of British and American lives.'

<sup>1</sup> On this same day the President, in a broadcast to the people of the United States, said that the United Nations intended to rid the Germans 'once for all' of Nazism and Prussian militarism, but that they did not intend 'to enslave the German people.'

<sup>2</sup> This approach was made to Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen indirectly through the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs. Papen told the Turkish Minister that he expected shortly to replace Ribbentrop, and that 'Hitler's fate' would follow his (Papen's) appointment. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen had answered that, in view of Papen's record, we should not listen to advances either through or from him, and that our terms were unconditional surrender. The Foreign Office approved of this reply.

On January 15, 1944, the Prime Minister wrote a short note for the War Cabinet on the question of 'unconditional surrender.' He understood the term to mean that, after they had surrendered, the Germans would have no rights to any particular form of treatment. On the other hand the victorious nations would owe it to themselves to observe the obligations of humanity and civilisation. The Prime Minister thought it desirable to consider what was going to happen to the Germans before deciding whether any more precise statements would induce them to surrender. After mentioning the disarmament and dismemberment of Germany, the large claims which the Russians were certain to put forward for reparation, the punishment of war criminals, and the transfer of the German population of East Prussia and the rest of Germany east of the Oder, the Prime Minister concluded that the Germans might find the vague terms of 'unconditional surrender'—with the mitigations put forward in the President's broadcast—less disturbing than a list of the Allied demands.

The Foreign Office, however—with the support of the Chiefs of Staff—still thought that some general declaration about the future of the German people might be desirable. They did not want to give up the demand for unconditional surrender or to make any statement likely to bring charges later of bad faith, but they considered it desirable to encourage the Germans that even in defeat they could have hope for the future. The Foreign Office drafted a declaration; the Prime Minister did not like it or think it would attract the Germans or that it should be issued unless it was timed to coincide with a victory over the German armies. Mr. Churchill himself made a statement in the House of Commons on February 22 that the term 'unconditional surrender' did not mean the enslavement or destruction of the German people. It meant that the Allies would not be bound to the Germans at the moment of surrender by any pact or obligation. It did not mean that the Allies were entitled to behave in a barbarous manner. 'If we are bound, we are bound by our own consciences to civilisation. We are not to be bound to the Germans as the result of a bargain struck.'<sup>1</sup>

The War Cabinet decided that for the time nothing more need be said. On the other hand they agreed with a suggestion from the Foreign Office that we should propose to the Russians and Americans that, while maintaining the principle of unconditional surrender for Germany, we should not necessarily apply it to the Axis satellites in Europe. The Soviet Government replied favourably on March 30 to this proposal: they had already announced that they were not asking for unconditional surrender from Finland. President Roosevelt however, was unwilling to make any general departure from the

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<sup>1</sup> Parl Deb. 5th ser., H. of C., vol. 397, cols. 698-9.



principle, though the United States Government would consider particular cases suggested by the British or Soviet Governments.

This plan was of no use for purposes of propaganda, but while the Foreign Office, with Mr. Eden's approval, was considering whether they would raise again their proposal for an Allied declaration, they had unexpected support from General Eisenhower. Mr. Stettinius, who was visiting General Eisenhower, telegraphed to Mr. Hull and General Marshall on April 12 that Generals Eisenhower and Bedell Smith thought that the term 'unconditional surrender' should be 'clarified by announcing the principles upon which the treatment of a defeated Germany would be based.' Sir A. Cadogan (in Mr. Eden's absence) asked for the Prime Minister's views. The Prime Minister replied that the matter rested with the President. 'He announced it (unconditional surrender) at Casablanca without any consultation.' Mr. Churchill still thought that the actual terms contemplated for Germany were not of a character to reassure the Germans; on the other hand they knew that 'unconditional surrender' had been interpreted very favourably in the case of the Italians. Mr. Churchill also continued to think that a statement should be timed to follow a victory, that it was 'all wrong for the Generals to start shivering before the battle. This battle has been forced upon us by the Russians and by the United States military authorities. We have gone in wholeheartedly, and I would not raise a timorous cry before a decision in the field has been taken.'

Mr. Eden was also disinclined to agree to any statement. On May 20, however, the President telegraphed to the Prime Minister a new proposal that he (Mr. Roosevelt) should issue a statement after D-day.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister replied on May 22 that he would bring the matter before the Cabinet. He thought it best for the President to speak 'for all three of us,' but that the 'main principle of the note we should strike towards Germany' required considerable thought, and that the timing of the statement would have to be related to 'the success or otherwise of our operation.'

The Prime Minister was, in fact, suggesting tactfully that the President should not issue his proposed statement. Mr. Churchill told Mr. Eden—who agreed with him—that the tone of the message would be more suitable after a victorious battle. The War Cabinet (with the approval of Field-Marshal Smuts and Mr. Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia) also thought that the Prime Minister should telegraph in favour of a postponement, since, if the message were sent before the landings had taken place, the Germans might distort it into a kind of

<sup>1</sup> The proposed statement called upon the Germans to realise that they would be totally defeated, and that a continuance of the war would be 'unintelligent' on their part. The Allies did not intend the total destruction of the German people, but merely that of 'the philosophy of those Germans who have announced that they could subjugate the world.'

peace-appeal. The Prime Minister added to the telegram that if the only issue between us and the Germans were that they had an evil philosophy, 'there would be little ground for the war going on. . . . In truth there is much more between them and us than a philosophy. Nearly all Europe cries for vengeance against brutal tyranny . . .'

The President replied on May 27 agreeing not to make any statement. Six months later—on November 22—when the German military position was almost hopeless, Mr. Roosevelt proposed the issue of a joint declaration that the Allies did not wish to devastate Germany or destroy the German people, but only to eliminate Nazi control. The President said that General Eisenhower thought that a statement of this kind would help to break down German morale. General Eisenhower had in fact reported on November 20 that one of the factors prolonging German resistance was the success of Nazi propaganda that unconditional surrender meant the destruction of Germany. The Prime Minister, after consulting the War Cabinet, replied on November 24, that we were doubtful about any such statement. We did not think the Germans much afraid of the treatment they would get from the British and American Armies or Governments. 'What they are afraid of is a Russian occupation . . . Nothing that we can say will eradicate this deep-seated fear.' The Prime Minister thought that the Germans would regard any statement from us as a sign of weakness, and as evidence of the advantages of further desperate resistance.<sup>1</sup> The President accepted this view, and did not issue any statement.

At the beginning of March, 1945, the Prime Minister thought that the time had come to warn the Germans of the situation (and especially of the risk of famine) they would be bringing on themselves if they went on fighting. The Foreign Office pointed out that a declaration of this kind might lead the Germans to conserve their own food supplies by reducing the rations of prisoners of war and other Allied nationals in Germany, or to assume that, if they surrendered now, the United Nations would be obliged to see that there was no acute food shortage in Germany. The Prime Minister told the War Cabinet that he would mention to the President the disadvantages as well as the advantages of his proposal. The President replied on March 21 that he did not think the time favourable for a declaration. No declaration was issued before the unconditional surrender of all the German forces.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister telegraphed to General Eisenhower on November 25 that it would be a mistake to shew the Germans that we were anxious for them to ease off their desperate opposition. General Eisenhower agreed with Mr. Churchill.

<sup>2</sup> I have not dealt in this chapter with German approaches to the Allies in the period immediately before the surrender, or with the actual details of the surrender. I have also not dealt with the controversy with the Russians over the German approaches to Field-Marshal Alexander. For the unconditional surrender of Japan, see Chapter XXXI, note 1.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### The Yalta Conference, February 4—11, 1945<sup>1</sup>

#### (i)

*President Roosevelt's refusal of the Prime Minister's proposal for a preliminary meeting of Foreign Secretaries: American acceptance of the Russian demands with regard to the Far East: approval by the Conference of the American proposal for a Declaration on Liberated Europe.*

AT the time of the visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Moscow, President Roosevelt appears to have suggested to the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, through Mr. Hopkins, that a tripartite conference might be held somewhere in the Black Sea area towards the end of November. Stalin agreed with the suggestion, and mentioned it to the Prime Minister.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister said he would go anywhere. The President also suggested Athens, Salonika, Malta, or Jerusalem, but Stalin insisted on a Black Sea meeting place and refused to travel by air. At the end of November the Prime Minister proposed to Mr. Roosevelt that, if Stalin would not leave Russia, they (the President and himself) might meet in London, and that M. Molotov might come as chief Russian representative. The President did not like this plan. On November 14 he asked for a postponement of the Conference until after his inauguration on January 20. He then suggested an Adriatic port or Sicily. Mr. Churchill telegraphed his disappointment at the delay and at the President's unwillingness to agree to a meeting in London. He also noted that the President did not want any French representation at a meeting with Stalin. Mr. Churchill thought that the French might come in 'toward the end in view of their vital interests in the arrangements made for policing Germany as well as in all questions affecting the Rhine frontier.'

Stalin had his way over the meeting place, and chose Yalta in the Crimea. The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President on January 5 his regret that Mr. Roosevelt was not coming to Great Britain. He suggested a preliminary Anglo-American military discussion at Malta, and also a conference between the three Foreign Secretaries in Egypt. He told Mr. Roosevelt that 'this may well be a fateful Conference, coming at a moment when the Great Allies are so

<sup>1</sup> For the discussions at the Conference on Yugoslavia, see Chapter XVII, section (iii), and on Turkey and the Montreux Convention, see Chapter XVI, section (iii).

<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister, in a message of September 27 to Stalin proposing a visit to Moscow, had said that the President had in mind The Hague as a possible place for a tripartite conference.

divided and the shadow of the war lengthens out before us. At the present time I think that the end of this war may well prove to be more disappointing than was the last.' Mr. Roosevelt, however, would not agree to anything more than a short staff meeting at Malta. He said that he could not spare Mr. Stettinius for a meeting of Foreign Secretaries, and that the conference at Yalta need not last longer than five or six days. Mr. Churchill telegraphed again in favour of some preliminary discussions. He said that Mr. Eden had asked particularly that Mr. Stettinius might come to Malta at least forty-eight hours in advance of the President for a discussion of the agenda at Yalta. The President replied somewhat abruptly that Mr. Stettinius could not reach Malta before January 31, and that he was sending Mr. Hopkins to England some days in advance of the Malta date to talk with the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Minister arrived in Malta on January 30, and the President on February 2. Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius and the Chiefs of Staff were thus able to hold short but important conversations on the Polish question and other matters before leaving by air for the Crimea. The Yalta Conference opened with a military discussion on February 4. The final meeting was on February 11; the last important business meeting—at which the usual bargaining took place—was held on February 10.<sup>2</sup>

As the Prime Minister had foreseen, the time allocated for the Conference was too short, but the decisions would probably not have been very different if they had not been taken in such haste, and the President had not hurried them.<sup>3</sup> The problem for the British and

<sup>1</sup> For this exchange of telegrams, see Churchill, VI, 296-8. There is no record in the Foreign Office archives of Mr. Hopkins' conversations in London.

<sup>2</sup> M. Molotov suggested on February 5 that the Conference should be called 'The Crimea Conference.' This title was used during and after the conference, but later usage has adopted the title 'Yalta.' The procedure adopted at Yalta, and later at Potsdam, was that the main subjects listed for discussion and the memoranda submitted by the Delegations were examined by the Foreign Secretaries either before or after a preliminary discussion at the plenary sessions. The Foreign Secretaries thus prepared the agenda for the plenary sessions. There is no agreed official record of the Yalta Conference. Each of the three delegations made its own record. The American record describes the first meeting on February 4 (which discussed military questions) as a plenary session; the British record of the political discussions regards the first plenary session as having taken place in the afternoon of February 5. On the other hand the British record describes as a plenary meeting the conversation between the Prime Minister, Mr. Eden, Stalin, and M. Molotov held in the afternoon of February 10; thus the British and American records agree in their enumeration of the seventh and eighth plenary sessions.

<sup>3</sup> As at Teheran, the President seems to have been irritated by the length of the Prime Minister's speeches. At one point, when the Prime Minister began to speak, the President passed a note to Mr. Stettinius: 'Now we are in for half an hour of it.' The President had arranged to see the Emperor Haile Selassie, King Ibn Saud, and King Farouk after the Conference, and the Prime Minister, with the support of Stalin, had some difficulty in persuading him to prolong the Conference in order to finish the business. There is no evidence in the Foreign Office archives that the British Ministers were disquieted at the President's state of health. Sir A. Cadogan, however, told Mr. Stettinius that he was shocked at the change in the President's appearance since he had seen him in September, 1944 (E. R. Stettinius, Jr., *Roosevelt and the Russians*, p. 72).

the Americans was to discover how far the Russians intended to collaborate with the western Powers after the war, or, in other words, what use they intended to make of their military power. The Americans were aware of the uncertainties in the matter, but were more easily satisfied with the Russian attitude. The President and his entourage continued to assume that, unlike Great Britain, Russia was not an imperialist power. This belief was important in relation to the two main questions which the President wanted to settle—the conditions of Russian entry into the war against Japan and the establishment of a World Security Organisation. With the U.S.S.R. inside such an Organisation the President thought that it would be possible to ensure the interests of the smaller European States.<sup>1</sup>

The settlement of the conditions of Russian entry into the Far Eastern war took place privately in discussions between the President and Stalin, or Mr. Harriman and M. Molotov. The British representatives were not invited to these discussions or consulted about terms, though at Malta Mr. Eden had suggested to Mr. Stettinius that we and the Americans should put together all our requirements from Russia and consider what we had to give in return. Mr. Eden had said that, if the Russians decided to enter the war against Japan, they would do so because they thought it in their interests that this war should not be won by the United States and Great Britain alone. We therefore need not offer a high price for Russian participation, and if we accepted the Russian territorial demands in the Far East, we ought to obtain a good return in the form of concessions elsewhere.

The President and Stalin reached general agreement about the terms on February 10; the Americans indeed already knew in some detail what the Russians intended to get for themselves. The terms were not shown to the British representatives until the next day, though the Prime Minister learned something of them in a private conversation with Stalin. Stalin said the Russians wanted a naval base such as Port Arthur, whereas the Americans wished the ports to be internationalised. The Prime Minister said that Great Britain would welcome the appearance of Russian ships in the Pacific, and that he was in favour of Russia making good her losses in the Russo-Japanese war. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden assented to the Russian terms<sup>2</sup> on the understanding that they were primarily an

<sup>1</sup> Hence the President regarded the immediate discussions over Poland as of less importance.

<sup>2</sup> The Russian terms were (i) the preservation of the *status quo* in Outer Mongolia, (ii) restoration of the rights lost at the treaty of Portsmouth (1905), i.e. the return of southern Sakhalin and the islands adjacent to it, internationalisation of the commercial port of Dairen, with safeguards for the pre-eminent interests of the U.S.S.R., restoration of the lease of Port Arthur as a Soviet naval base, joint operation by a Soviet-Chinese company of the Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian railways providing an outlet to Dairen, on the understanding that the pre-eminent interests of the U.S.S.R. would be safeguarded, and China would retain full sovereignty in Manchuria; (iii) acquisition

American affair and of concern to American military operations. The terms were embodied in an agreement signed by the Prime Minister<sup>1</sup> as well as by the President and Stalin but they were not discussed at the sessions of the Conference.

The Foreign Office regarded the Russian terms as a reversion to Tsarist imperialism. The Russian action in Iran,<sup>2</sup> the only country in which the three Great Powers were already exercising a joint control—was also ominous for the prospects of a joint control of Germany. Nevertheless the alternative to Anglo-Russian collaboration in Europe was so dark that, as before, the British Government were bound to continue the assumption that the Russians intended to honour their agreements. As a matter of prudence, however, the Foreign Office wanted to ensure that the Russians were committed to detailed declarations of common policy with their Allies which they could not easily elude.

The Americans agreed about the importance of obtaining such commitments. In the discussions at Malta Mr. Stettinius had mentioned American proposals for a Declaration on Liberated Europe and for the establishment of an Emergency High Commission for Liberated Europe which would function until the World Organisation had been set up.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Stettinius did not raise at the Conference the proposal for a High Commission, but he introduced the more general proposal for a Declaration on Liberated Europe. The draft text of this Declaration stated that the three Governments agreed to assist the liberated peoples of Europe 'to solve by democratic means their pressing political and economic problems.' This assistance would be given jointly, *inter alia*, (i) to enable the peoples concerned

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by the U.S.S.R. of the Kurile Islands. The Russians promised to enter the war against Japan within two or three months after the defeat of Germany. The Foreign Office were surprised at the willingness of the Americans to surrender Chinese rights without previous consultation with General Chiang Kai-shek. The document signed with the Russians recognised that Chinese consent was necessary, and the President undertook to obtain this consent, but the terms of the agreement guaranteed its fulfilment irrespective of Chinese objections. On the other hand the President knew that General Chiang Kai-shek wanted an agreement with the Russians which would preclude them from interfering in Chinese affairs on behalf of the Communists, and that he (General Chiang Kai-shek) understood that he would have to pay a considerable price for it. The President, however, did not get from the Russians any promise that in return for the Chinese concessions they would agree not to support the Communists.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden advised the Prime Minister not to sign the agreement.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 316–19.

<sup>3</sup> These proposals had already been communicated to the Foreign Office, and were supported generally by them. The Foreign Office had put forward a somewhat similar plan for a United Nations Commission for Europe in the spring and summer of 1943 (see above, p. 444), and Mr. Strang and Mr. Jebb had spoken of the plan to the State Department in March, 1943 (see above, p. 441). Mr. Eden mentioned to Mr. Stettinius at Malta, and the Prime Minister brought before the Conference, a proposal for quarterly meetings of the Foreign Secretaries. The Conference agreed that such meetings should be held, at intervals of about three or four months, in rotation at the various capitals. The first meeting would be held in London.



'to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all the democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people, and (ii) to facilitate, where necessary, the holding of such elections. . . . When, in the opinion of the three Governments, conditions in any European Liberated State or any former Axis satellite State in Europe make such action necessary, they [the three Powers] will immediately establish appropriate machinery for the carrying out of the joint responsibilities set forth in this declaration.'<sup>1</sup>

The declaration was accepted without much debate. M. Molotov wanted to add a qualification that in the choice of interim governmental authorities 'support will be given to the political figures of those countries who have taken an active part in the struggle against the German invaders.' The Russians at first refused, and then agreed to a proposal by Mr. Eden to invite the French Provisional Government to associate themselves with the Declaration.

(ii)

*Discussions on the dismemberment of Germany: Russian proposals for German reparation; Russian acceptance of the compromise proposal for voting on the World Council: Anglo-American agreement to the inclusion of the Ukrainian and White Russian Soviet Republics as separate members of the World Organisation: British refusal to agree to the Russian figures for reparation.*

At the first plenary session of the Conference Stalin said that, although the three Powers seemed in agreement about the dismemberment of Germany, they had not decided what form this dismemberment should take. The Prime Minister answered that there was agreement in principle, but that the actual method of dismemberment needed longer study. He repeated—as merely tentative—his own view that Prussia should be detached from Germany, and a State of considerable size established in the south, possibly with its capital at Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> This sentence gave each of the Powers an effective veto on a proposal to consult regarding the discharge of a joint responsibility. Even so M. Molotov 'watered down' the clause by proposing a change of wording (which the British and Americans accepted) to 'will immediately consult together on the measures necessary to discharge the joint responsibilities set forth in this declaration.' Nevertheless the earlier clauses remained mandatory in themselves; any one of the signatory Governments failing to carry them out—as the Russians failed to carry them out, for example, in Poland—could be held to have violated its obligations. This point was important in connection with the Prime Minister's wish that the Western Powers should refuse to implement the agreement about the zones of occupation in Germany (and thus withdraw into these zones from their lines of military advance beyond them) until the Russians fulfilled their obligations under the Yalta declaration. See also the discussions at the Potsdam Conference (Chapter XXXI, below).



Stalin thought it necessary to include in the terms of surrender a general statement that Germany should be dismembered. The President said that he was in favour of dismemberment, and wanted a decision in principle at the Conference. Mr. Churchill was willing to consider an inclusion of some reference to dismemberment in the terms of surrender.

The Foreign Secretaries discussed this inclusion on February 9. M. Molotov asked for a form of words showing that the Allies considered dismemberment necessary, and intended to carry it out. Mr. Eden objected to the use of the word 'necessary' until we had decided whether dismemberment was practicable. The Foreign Secretaries therefore agreed merely to insert in article 12 of the Instrument of Surrender<sup>1</sup> a reference to dismemberment, and to set up a special committee to study the question. M. Molotov proposed that the committee should meet in London, and consist of Mr. Eden and the United States and Soviet Ambassadors. Mr. Eden suggested that the study might be made by the European Advisory Commission in order to bring in the French. Mr. Stettinius did not want French participation, but agreed to a proposal from M. Molotov that the special committee might consider it.

The Prime Minister and the President were also in favour of giving a zone of occupation to the French. The Prime Minister argued for this plan, and the more strongly after the President had said at the first plenary session on February 5 that American troops were unlikely to stay in Europe for more than two years. Stalin did not want the French on the Control Commission.<sup>2</sup> The President agreed with him on this point, in spite of the arguments to the contrary from the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden on the practical impossibility of giving the French a zone of occupation unless they had a place on the central administration.

At the next plenary session the Prime Minister said that the position of France had become of great importance in view of the President's statement about the withdrawal of American forces. The President then went back a little on his statement. He explained that, if it were possible to get agreement on something like the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, there was more chance of full American participation in the organisation of peace throughout the world. At a meeting of the

<sup>1</sup> This article laid down that the three Powers 'shall possess supreme authority with respect to Germany. In the exercise of such authority they will take such steps, including the complete disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany as they may deem requisite for future peace and security.' The relevant phrase now read: '... the complete disarmament, demilitarisation, and the dismemberment ...'

<sup>2</sup> Stalin made some disparaging remarks that the French had 'opened the gates to the enemy,' and that otherwise the Great Powers would not have suffered so many losses. He said that the Control Commission should consist only of those Powers who had stood firmly against Germany from the beginning. Mr. Churchill could well have made some very sharp comments on this Russian statement. He said only that 'we had all got into difficulties at the beginning of the war.'

Foreign Secretaries on February 7 Mr. Eden repeated the British view; Mr. Stettinius and M. Molotov were in favour of postponing a decision. Later in the day the Prime Minister again argued in favour of the British proposal. The President, with Stalin's support, suggested that the matter might be left for settlement by correspondence. The Prime Minister said that this procedure would take months. The Conference then agreed to discuss the matter again. When they did so on February 10, the President accepted the British proposal, somewhat ungraciously, by saying that the French could do less harm if they were members of the Control Commission. Stalin also withdrew his opposition.

The Conference began a discussion of German reparation at the first plenary session. M. Maisky,<sup>1</sup> at Stalin's request, explained the Russian plan for two forms of reparation in kind: (i) the removal of factories, plant, machine tools, rolling stock, etc., (ii) ten annual payments in kind. The Russians thought it necessary for the restoration of their own economy and the re-establishment of security in Europe that German heavy industries should be reduced to about one-fifth of their present figure. All factories specialising in military products, aircraft factories, and synthetic oil plants should be removed within two years. After the ten-year period of payments a tripartite International Control Commission should be set up to control the German economy for an indefinite time. The Russians realised that the payments would not cover the losses. They therefore suggested two criteria of priorities among the claimants: (i) contribution towards winning the war, (ii) material losses suffered by the claimant. The Russians claimed as their share 10,000 million dollars. They proposed the establishment of a Reparation Commission at Moscow to settle details.

The Prime Minister's first comment was to refer to the disappointment over reparation after the first World War. He agreed to a Reparation Commission, but did not believe it possible to get from Germany anything like the sum which the Russians claimed for themselves alone. He mentioned the British financial position and British debts of nearly £3000 million incurred in the common cause. He spoke of the damage done to other countries, e.g. France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway, and asked what would happen if the Germans were reduced to starvation. If we supplied them with food, who would pay for it? The President and Stalin proposed a Commission of the three Powers. Mr. Churchill thought that the Commission ought to take account of the claims of other countries.<sup>2</sup> At the Prime Minister's suggestion the Foreign Secretaries were asked to

<sup>1</sup> M. Maisky was at this time Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin was unwilling to include France. Mr. Churchill suggested that the sufferings endured at the hands of the enemy might be a better criterion of allocation than exertion in the war. On either count Russia would stand well.

draw up a draft directive for a Commission. The Foreign Secretaries began their discussions on February 7. M. Molotov brought forward a document claiming that out of a total 20,000 million dollars to be received over ten years the U.S.S.R. should receive 10,000 million, the United States and Great Britain 8,000 million, and other countries 2,000 million in all. Mr. Eden refused to give an opinion on these figures, but was inclined to agree with the proposals for a single payment in kind followed by annual deliveries over ten years. At a later meeting of the Foreign Secretaries the Americans also would not commit themselves to a total figure of 20,000 million dollars, though they were prepared to take it as a basis for discussion and to agree to a 50 per cent share for the U.S.S.R. Mr. Eden refused to agree to figures either for a total or for the Russian share. He said that the British Delegation had consulted the War Cabinet and were awaiting their instructions.

Mr. Eden agreed at Malta to support the American compromise proposal—on the lines of Sir A. Cadogan's earlier recommendation—for voting on the Security Council.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stettinius introduced the plan at the second plenary meeting of the Conference on February 6. He circulated a paper listing the types of decision which would require an affirmative vote by the permanent members of the Council, but on which a member would not vote if the decision concerned a dispute to which it was a party. The Prime Minister supported the American proposal,<sup>2</sup> and explained it to Stalin, who admitted that he had not studied it in detail. On the following day M. Molotov accepted the proposal. He then raised the question of the participation of the constituent Soviet Republics as members of the Organisation. He asked that three or at least two (he mentioned the Ukrainian, White Russian, and Lithuanian Republics) should be given this position in view of their importance and their sacrifices in the war. The Prime Minister said that four British self-governing Dominions had played a part in the organisation of peace before 1939. They had entered the war in 1939 of their own free will and with full knowledge of our weakness. We could not agree to any plan which excluded them from the place which they had held for a quarter of a century. The Prime Minister therefore sympathised with the Russian proposals, though he could not give a final answer without consultation with Mr. Eden and possibly with the War Cabinet.

The matter was referred to the Foreign Secretaries. They recommended the admission of two of the constituent Republics. They were also asked to consider an American proposal that a conference to set up the World Organisation should be held in the United States

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 458 and 461.

<sup>2</sup> For the Prime Minister's account of the discussion, see Churchill, VI, 309-12.

not later than the end of April and that invitations should be limited to those States which had declared war on the common enemy. They agreed to recommend April 25 as the date and Washington as the place,<sup>1</sup> and to limit the invitation to States which had signed the United Nations declaration before the last day of the Yalta Conference.<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had reported to the War Cabinet the questions raised at the Conference. The War Cabinet on February 8 approved 'with great satisfaction' the agreement about voting on the Council. They accepted the Russian claim for the inclusion of the Ukrainian and White Russian Republics. They did not want to commit themselves to dismemberment and thought the term required more exact definition. They regarded the Russian attitude on reparation as fantastic. In a telegram (received at Yalta on February 9) to the Prime Minister they stated their view (i) that we could not quote any figures without further investigation, but that anyhow the Russian figures were far too high, (ii) that we must avoid the risk of having to pay for the imports necessary to keep Germany alive while other Powers received reparation from her, (iii) that we could not accept the Russian proposal to relegate to a second rank the claims of the smaller Allies, (iv) that France should be a member of the Allied Reparation Committee.<sup>3</sup>

The Foreign Office was also disturbed at the unwillingness of the Americans and the Russians to support the policy of building up France as one of the Great Powers. The American attitude towards General de Gaulle's Government might be due to prejudice and ignorance, but the Soviet attitude might well be part of a considered policy of weakening western Europe. The American approval of the Russian attempts to exclude France from participation in the settlement of German affairs might thus have a serious effect on our interests.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At Mr. Stettinius' suggestion the meeting place was changed to San Francisco.

<sup>2</sup> The President explained at a plenary session on February 8 that some time earlier Mr. Welles, who was then Acting Secretary of State, had told the South American Republics that, while they should break off relations with Germany, they need not declare war. Five or six of them had acted on this advice, and now felt themselves entitled to an invitation to the proposed Conference. The President had written to them that, if they wished to be invited to the Conference, they would have to declare war on Germany. He therefore suggested that invitations should be sent to those States which were willing to declare war on Germany at once. Stalin agreed if the time limit were fixed as March 1. The Prime Minister then suggested the inclusion of Turkey and Egypt. The Foreign Office later proposed the addition of Saudi Arabia. See also below, p. 532, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> For the views of the War Cabinet on the decisions about Poland, see below, pp. 498-500.

<sup>4</sup> In a telegram of February 10 for the War Cabinet the Prime Minister said that the Russians were as determined as the Americans to keep France, and especially General de Gaulle, out of the 'big Three.' The Prime Minister had been surprised at the anti-French attitude of the Russians.

The British Ministers stated the views of the War Cabinet at the seventh plenary session of the Conference on February 10. Earlier in the afternoon of February 10 the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had a conversation with Stalin and M. Molotov. They explained that we could not take the Russian figure as a basis of work for the Reparation Commission because we thought it impossible to collect so large a sum from Germany. On the other hand the Prime Minister said that by removing factories and equipment from Germany the Russians would be doing us a service, since the removal would put an end to German exports which could then be replaced by British exports. At the plenary session later in the afternoon, however, Stalin again argued for the inclusion of figures, and the Prime Minister again refused. Finally Stalin said that what he wanted to get settled was that Germany should pay reparations in kind, and that the Moscow Commission should consider the amount to be paid. The Russians would put their figures before the Commission, and the other parties could do the same. The Conference therefore agreed to a secret protocol to this effect. The reference to the total sum was that: 'The Soviet and American Delegations agreed as follows: "The Moscow Reparation Commission should take in its initial studies as a basis for discussion the suggestion of the Soviet Government that the total sum . . . should be 20,000 million dollars, and that 50 per cent of it should go to the U.S.S.R."' The protocol then stated that the British Delegation was of the opinion that 'pending consideration of the reparation question by the Moscow Reparation Commission no figures of reparation should be mentioned.'

(iii)

*The Polish question at the Yalta Conference: appointment of a Commission to consult with representative Poles on the reorganisation of the Russian-sponsored Provisional Government as a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity.*

The questions of German reparation, and the possible dismemberment of the Reich as a safeguard against further German aggression were of great importance, but they had not the urgency of the Polish problem. Here an immediate decision was necessary. The Russians had now established their own puppet government in Poland;<sup>1</sup> they

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<sup>1</sup> The Russians moved the Lublin Government to Warsaw soon after the entry of the Red Army into the city on January 17, 1945. The representatives of the western Powers, however, at the Yalta Conference continued, for the most part, to use the term 'Lublin Government.'

were setting about the whole dismal process of 'liquidating' non-communist opposition. The Western Powers, for the most obvious reasons, could not even consider at this time the use of force against them. Hence the only hope of saving Polish independence was to try to get the puppet government replaced by, or, more likely, broadened into a Provisional Government more representative of Polish opinion, and therefore a more trustworthy instrument for holding free elections.

In a memorandum written as a brief for the British Delegation to the Yalta Conference the Foreign Office considered that as the first stage towards securing the ultimate objective of free elections in Poland, we should try to secure changes in the Lublin Government which would allow British and American recognition on a provisional basis. We had therefore to ensure that we and the Americans had representatives in the country; otherwise the Russians would 'seal off' Poland from the outside world and treat it as they had treated the Baltic States in 1940. The Polish Government in London could no longer affect the situation in Poland, except indeed to increase the risks of a hopeless attempt at resistance. The Russians would make no agreement with us as long as we continued to recognise the London Government.

We wanted therefore to be able to transfer our recognition to a modified Lublin administration without a shock to British and American opinion, and without losing the loyalty of the Poles who were fighting with us. We could not carry opinion with us unless we could get the Lublin Government broadened to include adequate representation of the Polish parties. M. Mikołajczyk and, if possible, one or two other London Poles should be brought into this representation. We should have to persuade the Poles to accept the Russian frontier demands; we might take up a suggestion coming from the Poles themselves that the Allies should impose a frontier settlement.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Before the meeting of the Conference the Polish Government brought to the notice of the Prime Minister a declaration by the Lublin Government that they intended to try as traitors all soldiers of the Polish Home Army and members of the Underground Movement. The Foreign Office already had information that mass arrests and deportations were taking place. They thought it impossible to protect the Poles by raising the matter with the Russians as a separate question. The only way to save them was by securing a wider administration in Poland, though we might have a chance at the Conference of impressing upon the Russians the concern felt by British public opinion at the treatment of Poles who had resisted the Germans bravely and were good patriots. See below, p. 498.

M. Mikołajczyk and M. Romer had also suggested, as a method of establishing a new government, either (i) the appointment of a Presidential Council composed of well-known representatives of politics, science, and the churches (this Council would summon a conference of representatives of the Underground Movement, the Lublin Government, and the Polish political parties, and would also invite British, American, and Russian representatives. The Conference would determine the allocation of seats in the new government and would choose a Prime Minister), or (ii) the appointment of a Council of Regency (on the analogy of the Greek settlement). The Foreign Office doubted whether the Russians would accept the first alternative. They might agree to the second, with Prince Sapieha, Archbishop of Cracow, as head of a council.



The Polish question was discussed at seven of the eight plenary political sessions of the Yalta Conference, and at the meetings of the Foreign Secretaries. Mr. Roosevelt opened the discussion at the second plenary meeting on February 6<sup>1</sup> by saying that, as at the Teheran Conference, he was in favour generally of the Curzon line, but would find matters easier in relation to public opinion in the United States if the Russians, in return for Königsberg, would let the Poles have Lwow and some of the oil-bearing lands in the neighbourhood. The President regarded the question of the future government of Poland as the most important point. He suggested, as one among several possibilities, the establishment of a Presidential Council. The Prime Minister repeated his willingness to accept the Russian claim to the Curzon line, including Lwow, but appealed to the Soviet Government, as an act of magnanimity to make some concession on the lines suggested by the President. Mr. Churchill, like the President, was, however, less interested in boundaries than in the establishment of a strong, free and independent Poland in friendly relations with the Soviet Union. He also suggested an *interim* government or governmental instrument which would prepare the way for a free vote of the Polish people. Stalin then made a long speech in which he refused any concession with regard to the Curzon line and proposed the western Neisse as the Polish-German frontier. He said that the Lublin Poles would have nothing to do with the London Government and would not accept M. Mikolajczyk as Prime Minister, and that the agents of the London Government in the Polish Underground movement had been doing great harm, and had killed over 200 Russian soldiers. Stalin was willing to ask members of the Lublin Government to Moscow for discussions. At this point Mr. Roosevelt proposed an adjournment, but the Prime Minister said that he must put it on record that the British information about the Lublin Government was different from that of the Soviet Government. According to our information the Lublin Government did not represent the views of more than a third of the Polish people, and we feared a collision between the Lublin representatives and the Underground Movement, which would result in bloodshed, arrests and deportations.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius agreed at Malta to recommend to the Prime Minister and the President the support of the Polish suggestion for the appointment of a Presidential Council which would choose a new *interim* government. Mr. Eden also considered that we should not agree to the latest claim of the Lublin Poles that the western frontier should include not only Stettin and Breslau, but territory as far as the western Neisse. (There are two rivers of this name. The more westerly runs northwards from the neighbourhood of Reichenberg to join the Oder above Frankfurt-on-Oder. The eastern Neisse joins the Oder below Oppeln.) Before the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had left for Yalta the War Cabinet had discussed the question, and had considered that there would be strong criticism in Great Britain if the Polish frontier went as far as the Oder. The Prime Minister's view was that we were committed to giving the Poles, if they accepted the Curzon line, as much territory up to the Oder line as they could absorb. Mr. Eden said that the Lublin Poles were now asking for even more German territory, and that we ought not to go beyond our existing commitments.



During the evening of February 6 Mr. Harriman brought to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden the draft of a letter which the President proposed to send to Stalin. The British Ministers agreed to the letter, with some amendments. After saying that, if we could not reach an agreement when our armies were converging on the common enemy, we should fail to do so later on even more vital questions, Mr. Roosevelt proposed that, in addition to M. Beirut and M. Morawski from the Lublin Government, we should also invite to the Conference any two of a list of Poles representing other sections of Polish opinion.<sup>1</sup> If we could agree with these Poles on a Provisional Government,<sup>2</sup> the British and American representatives would then examine with Stalin the conditions under which they might recognise such a government.

At the next plenary meeting in the afternoon of February 7 Stalin said that he was arranging to telephone to MM. Beirut and Morawski and would ask them where the Archbishop and M. Witos could be found, but he did not know where they were, and feared that they might not reach Yalta in time.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile M. Molotov had drawn up a document which, according to Stalin, met to some extent the President's wishes. The document mentioned the Curzon line, with minor adjustments, and, in the west, the western Neisse as the Polish frontier; it also referred to the addition to the Polish Provisional Government of 'some democratic leaders from Polish émigré circles,' and to the recognition of this enlarged government by the Allied Powers.<sup>4</sup> The President and the Prime Minister proposed the substitution of the term 'Poles abroad' for 'émigré'. Mr. Churchill also suggested the inclusion of the words 'and from within Poland itself.' Mr. Churchill said that the Poles should not be given more German territory than they wished, or could properly manage, and that a large section of British opinion disapproved of a forcible transfer of populations. There was further discussion of this question, but no decision was reached.

At the fourth plenary meeting on February 8 the President brought forward a revised draft of M. Molotov's proposals. He rejected the extension of the frontier to the western Neisse, and proposed that M. Molotov, Sir A. Clark Kerr, and Mr. Harriman should be authorised to invite MM. Bierut and Morawski, the Archbishop of Cracow, and MM. Witos, Mikolajczyk and Grabski to choose a Presidential Committee of three—possibly the Archbishop, MM. Bierut and Grabski; this Committee would set up a government of representative Polish

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Roosevelt mentioned the Archbishop of Cracow and M. Witos.

<sup>2</sup> At Mr. Eden's suggestion the President added that the Provisional Government would doubtless include MM. Mikolajczyk, Grabski, and Romer.

<sup>3</sup> The British and Americans did not question this statement, though it is hardly conceivable that the Soviet authorities—if Stalin had asked them to do so—could not have discovered the whereabouts of the Archbishop of Cracow (if not M. Witos) and brought him at once to Yalta.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of M. Molotov's draft, see Churchill, VI, 326.

leaders, who would pledge themselves to hold, as soon as possible, free elections to a Constituent Assembly.

The Prime Minister also circulated a British draft, but said that, since the Conference had begun to discuss the President's text, he would not for the time refer to this draft. The British text<sup>1</sup> mentioned 'the lands desired by Poland to the east of the line of the Oder,' and thus indirectly ruled out the Neisse. It was also less detailed in its recommendations for the procedure of establishing a new Provisional Government; it left M. Molotov, Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman to approach 'representative Polish leaders' and submit their suggestions to the Allied Governments.

M. Molotov did not agree with Mr. Roosevelt's proposal for a Presidential Committee, and argued that, since the Provisional Government already existed, all that was required was to enlarge it (i.e. the establishment of a new Provisional Government was unnecessary). The Prime Minister then spoke at some length of the reasons why British opinion would not accept the transfer of recognition to the Lublin Government, and why it was essential to make a new start and to hold a general election as soon as conditions allowed. After another argument whether the Lublin Government did or did not represent Polish opinion, Stalin repeated that, until a general election could be held, we had to deal with the existing government as we had to deal with General de Gaulle in France. We therefore need do no more than reconstruct this government; there was no reason to set up a new one. In answer to a question from the Prime Minister, Stalin said that elections might be held in Poland within a month. The Prime Minister thought that this possibility—even with a delay of two months—would change the whole situation.

The Conference therefore agreed that Mr. Eden, Mr. Stettinius, and M. Molotov should meet the two Ambassadors for further discussion. This discussion took place on the morning of February 9. Mr. Stettinius said that the United States delegation would drop the proposal for a Presidential Committee. He suggested, as a formula, that 'the present Polish Provisional Government be reorganised into a fully representative government based on all democratic forces in Poland and including democratic leaders from abroad, to be termed 'The Provisional Government of National Unity'.' This government, which would be pledged to the holding of free elections, would be recognised by the three Powers, and their Ambassadors would be 'charged with the responsibility of observing and reporting' on the carrying out of the pledge.

M. Molotov argued again that the principal requirement was a general election, and that meanwhile we need do no more than re-organise the existing government. Mr. Eden said that British opinion

<sup>1</sup> This text is printed in Churchill, VI, 328-9.

would not regard elections managed by the Lublin Government as free, and that, for this reason, the election should take place after the formation of a new government. Mr. Eden proposed a revised version of the first part of the American formula to the effect that 'the three Governments consider that a new situation has been created by the complete liberation of Poland by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a fully representative Provisional Polish Government which can now be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of western Poland. This Government shall comprise members of the present Provisional Government at Warsaw and other democratic leaders from within Poland and from Poles abroad. The new government, thus established, should be termed 'The Provisional Government of National Unity.'

M. Molotov refused this formula, and insisted on the Russian proposal to reorganise the government on the basis of the present Warsaw government. He also rejected, as offensive to Polish opinion, the reference to the duty of the Ambassadors to report on the conduct of the elections. M. Molotov introduced amendments in this sense at the fifth plenary meeting on February 9. Mr. Roosevelt now said that the differences with the Russians now seemed to be largely a matter of words. He asked on behalf of six (*sic*) million Poles in the United States for some assurance that the elections would be honest and free. He thought that the Foreign Secretaries could produce an agreed text. The Prime Minister also appealed for an assurance of this kind. The Lublin Government had said that they would bring to trial as traitors all members of the Home Army and Underground Movement. The Prime Minister had been much distressed by this announcement, and wanted to be able to tell the House of Commons that there would be effective guarantees of the freedom of election.

When the Foreign Secretaries met in the evening of February 9 Mr. Eden was able to strengthen his position by stating the views of the War Cabinet. He and the Prime Minister had kept the Cabinet informed of the discussions, and had heard from them on February 9 that public opinion was increasingly critical of the new territorial demands of the Lublin Government. The War Cabinet suggested that the phrase referring to the western frontier should run 'and such other lands to the east of the line of the Oder as at the Peace Conference it shall be considered desirable to transfer to Poland.' They were also afraid that between the formation of the new Provisional Government and the elections the non-communists might have been eliminated from the Government; we ought therefore to ensure that the balance of the Government was maintained until after the elections.

Mr. Eden told the Foreign Secretaries that, unless something on the lines of the British draft were accepted, there was no hope of agreement, and no use in continuing the discussions. M. Molotov

again tried to weaken the draft, and went back to his earlier phrase that the government 'now acting in Poland' should be 'reorganised' on a broader basis, and then accorded recognition by the three Powers. Mr. Eden said that he was not asking the Soviet Government to recognise a reorganised London Government, while they were asking the British and Americans to recognise the reorganised Lublin Government. What we wanted was to recognise something new. M. Molotov also repeated his objections to the provision that the three Ambassadors should report on the elections. Mr. Stettinius thought that in view of American opinion the President would insist upon a provision of this kind. Mr. Eden pointed out that it was only a statement of fact because obviously the Ambassadors would report to their Governments.

On the following morning Mr. Stettinius said that he was prepared to omit the provision on the understanding that the President would be free to make public any information received from the United States Ambassador at Warsaw. Mr. Eden, however, refused to leave out the sentence. At the sixth plenary meeting,<sup>1</sup> in the afternoon of February 10, the Prime Minister came back to the matter. He explained the disadvantages from the British point of having no representatives in Poland who could keep us informed. Stalin then agreed that our Ambassador should have freedom of movement in the country, as far as the Red Army was concerned, though we should have to make our own arrangements with the Polish Government. The Prime Minister then agreed upon a new clause to take the place of the reference to the Ambassadors.

Later in the afternoon the Conference accepted, at the seventh plenary meeting, the draft statement.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister then

<sup>1</sup> Although this meeting is described in the British record as the sixth plenary session, it was in fact only a conversation between the Prime Minister, Mr. Eden, Stalin, and M. Molotov. No American representatives were present. See above, pp. 493 and 485, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The text as accepted ran as follows: 'A new situation has been created by the complete liberation of Poland by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Provisional Polish Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of western Poland. The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganised on a broader democratic basis, with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman, and Sir A. Clark Kerr should be authorised as a commission to consult in the first instance in Moscow with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad with a view to the reorganisation of the present Government along the above lines. This 'Provisional Government of National Unity' shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as practicable on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates.'

When a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has been properly formed in conformity with the above, the Government of the U.S.S.R., which now maintains diplomatic relations with the present Provisional Government of Poland, and the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States of America will establish diplomatic relations with the new Polish Government of National Unity, and will exchange Ambassadors, by whose reports the respective Governments will be kept informed about the situation in Poland.' [Then followed the statement on frontiers.]

raised again the question of the western frontier. He mentioned the telegram which he had received from the War Cabinet, objecting to setting the frontier as far west as the western Neisse, and suggested that no reference should be made to the possibility of the Poles going beyond the Oder. President Roosevelt said that it would be easier for him if neither frontier were mentioned, and that he wanted to have the views of the new government. Stalin, however, said that the eastern frontier would have to be mentioned. The Conference decided to add to the statement on Poland a reference to the Curzon line, 'with digressions from it in some regions of 5 to 8 km. in favour of Poland,' and to 'substantial accessions of territory in the north and west.' The opinion of the new government would be asked about the extent of these accessions, and the final delimitation of the western frontier would 'await the Peace Conference.'

On February 12 the War Cabinet noted with satisfaction that the British Ministers had succeeded in keeping open the question of the western frontier. At Mr. Attlee's suggestion the War Cabinet sent a telegram of congratulation to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden on the results of the Conference. It does not appear that the War Cabinet were concerned at the manifest ambiguities of phrasing in the statement on Poland. The Ministers seem to have agreed with the views of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden that the most important consideration was not the formation of an *interim* Provisional Government but the holding within a short time of free elections.<sup>1</sup> In a statement of February 27 during a debate in the House of Commons on the Yalta agreement the Prime Minister laid special emphasis upon the provision of free elections. Mr. Eden later in the debate said plainly that he disliked the Lublin Government. He and Mr. Churchill stated that we should continue to recognise the London Government until a new government had been formed.

The Poles in London did not share the satisfaction of the War Cabinet at the results of the Yalta Conference. The Polish Government issued a statement on February 13 describing the frontier proposals as a 'fifth partition of Poland, this time carried out by her Allies.' M. Mikolajczyk, Count Raczynski, and General Anders were equally plain. General Anders thought that the agreement would mean 'the

<sup>1</sup> On February 19 the Prime Minister told the War Cabinet that Stalin had said that Russia did not intend to repeat the policy of the partitions and civil oppression of Poland. The Prime Minister had no doubt of the sincerity of Stalin's declaration, and of the Russian wish to work harmoniously with the two English-speaking democracies. The Prime Minister described Stalin as a man of great power in whom he had confidence. He did not expect him to start on any adventures, but he realised that much depended on Stalin's life.

end of Poland.<sup>1</sup> Count Raczynski said that our Ambassador in Poland would have no more opportunities than our Ambassador in Moscow of reporting on the situation, and that there was no guarantee that the members admitted into the new government would be kept in it. M. Mikolajczyk was willing to go to Moscow, but said that the new government would merely be the Lublin Government with a few outside individuals added to it.

On February 18 the Foreign Office instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr on the work of the Moscow Commission.<sup>2</sup> They regarded as 'crucial points' that the non-Lublin Poles should have adequate representation in the new government, and real influence over the decisions—and execution—of policy, and that the government should be assured of permanency pending the holding of elections. M. Molotov would certainly work for the retention of real power in the hands of the Lublin Poles; we and the Americans would have to make the strongest possible stand on the other side. The Commission should not themselves choose the Poles to form the new government, but should invite to Moscow representatives of the Lublin Poles and of others from inside and outside Poland. If possible, an immediate stop should be put to measures against leaders of the Underground Movement and army, and other 'anti-Lublin' Poles.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At an interview with the Prime Minister General Anders pointed out the difficulty in which the Polish forces were placed, since they had taken an oath to the Polish Constitution and Government. He also thought that the Lublin Government would not allow them to return to Poland. The Prime Minister said that he did not see why most of the troops should not go back, but, if they could not do so, he would try to secure British citizenship and a refuge in the British Empire for them. Mr. Eden was impressed by the critical attitude of the Poles and their 'extreme suspicions' of Russian intentions.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Harriman was instructed on similar lines on February 28.

<sup>3</sup> In spite of the Prime Minister's appeal to Stalin, the Foreign Office continued to receive information—which was supported not only by the reports of the French representative (see p. 271, note 1) with the Lublin Government but also by the actual announcements of this government—that the Lublin Poles were carrying out measures of liquidation on a large scale in order to terrorise and destroy their opponents. These measures were being taken with the connivance, and indeed the active help, of the Russians.

## CHAPTER XXIX

From Yalta to Potsdam: (I) Russian obstructiveness on the Moscow Commission: Marshal Tito's disregard of his agreement with M. Subasic: Russian unilateral action in south-east Europe: the Prime Minister's efforts to secure an early tripartite meeting: Anglo-American recognition of the new Polish Provisional Government

### (i)

*The Moscow Commission, February 23–April 17, 1945: Russian refusal to accept the British and American interpretation of the Yalta Agreement on Poland.*

THE Moscow Commission set up by the Yalta Conference held its first meeting on February 23, 1945. When Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman suggested the names of MM. Mikolajczyk, Romer and Grabski as Poles from outside Poland to be invited to the consultations, M. Molotov said that the 'Warsaw Poles' might object to M. Mikolajczyk, and that their views should be ascertained 'for information.' These views were received in an arrogant reply which ruled out MM. Mikolajczyk and Romer as hostile to the Yalta decisions, and also rejected M. Witos because he had 'gone into hiding' after the liberation of the country. M. Molotov now maintained that, according to the Yalta agreement, the consultations at Moscow were to be 'in the first instance' with the Warsaw Poles.<sup>1</sup> The two Ambassadors protested against this attempt of the Warsaw Poles to dictate to the Commission, but thought it better to get them to Moscow in order to convince them that they had no right of veto in the choice of other representative Poles. The Foreign Office, however, considered these tactics to be wrong, and instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr to see that the other invitations were sent out at once. M. Molotov on March 1 insisted that the Warsaw Poles must be consulted about the persons

<sup>1</sup> The Russian text of the agreement read 'to consult in Moscow in the first instance with members of the present Provisional Government.' The English text read 'to consult in the first instance in Moscow with members, etc.'. The Foreign Office refused to accept the Russian attempt to twist the meaning of the words to imply prior consultation with the Warsaw Poles. The context of the discussions shows that the Foreign Office view was correct. The wording was suggested, in its English form, by the Americans, and accepted in this form, without any subsequent change, during the discussions at the conference.



to be invited, though he agreed to telegraph to M. Bierut and his colleagues to postpone coming to Moscow.

On February 27 M. Molotov had offered to allow facilities for British and American observers to go to Poland. Sir A. Clark Kerr answered that he would be glad to recommend the proposal if it did not carry the implication that we were recognising the Warsaw Government. After some discussion M. Molotov suggested that the proposal should be held over for a time. The Prime Minister sent a message to Sir A. Clark Kerr that it was of the greatest importance for us to have direct sources of information in Poland, and that we should accept M. Molotov's 'friendly offer.' The two Ambassadors<sup>1</sup> accepted the offer on March 1. M. Molotov was disconcerted at this prompt acceptance, and said that the offer would have to be 'cleared' with the Warsaw Government. Within a week M. Molotov withdrew his offer because we had refused to invite the Warsaw Poles to Moscow and because Mr. Eden had made some contemptuous remarks about them in the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile Mr. Eden had instructed Lord Halifax to suggest to the United States Government a joint communication to the Russians reminding them that the purpose of the Yalta agreement was to secure as soon as possible conditions in which free elections could be held, and refusing to accept the Russian claim for prior consultation with the Warsaw leaders. The United States Government would not go as far as the Foreign Office suggested, and would not instruct Mr. Harriman to support Sir A. Clark Kerr in a reference to the supervision of the elections. M. Molotov, on March 5, refused any concession to the British views.

The Prime Minister decided on March 8 to send a telegram to the President enclosing the draft of a message to Stalin. He told Mr. Roosevelt that the only way to stop M. Molotov's tactics was to send a message to Stalin setting out the essentials upon which there must be agreement if Parliament were not to be told that the Yalta policy had failed. Mr. Churchill thought that far more was involved than the case of Poland. The Polish question was a test between us and the Russians of the meaning to be attached to such terms as 'democracy, sovereignty, independence, representative government, and free and unfettered elections.'<sup>3</sup>

The Prime Minister's draft message to Stalin laid down five essential conditions: (i) M. Molotov's interpretation of the Yalta statement as implying a prior right of consultation for the Warsaw Poles should be withdrawn. (ii) All Poles nominated by any of the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Harriman accepted on his own authority.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 500.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Churchill mentioned the strong undercurrent of feeling among all classes and parties in Great Britain 'and in our own hearts' about a Soviet domination of Poland.

three Governments should be accepted for consultation unless ruled out unanimously by the Commission; M. Molotov could not therefore 'veto' M. Mikolajczyk. (iii) The Poles invited for consultation should discuss the questions at issue among themselves, and the Commission should preside over the discussions in an impartial arbitral capacity. (iv) The Soviet Government should prevent the Warsaw administration from further action affecting social, constitutional, economic or political conditions in Poland. (v) The Soviet Government should make arrangements for British and American observers to visit Poland.<sup>1</sup>

Sir A. Clark Kerr suggested that before sending a message to Stalin it would be better to make another attempt to convince M. Molotov. The Americans also considered Mr. Churchill's requirements too drastic. They agreed with our objectives, but did not want to go beyond the actual terms of the Yalta agreement; the agreement, for example, did not mention the despatch of observers. The State Department instructed Mr. Harriman to communicate to M. Molotov a statement of the American attitude and to point out that the Commission could not carry out its work if one group of Poles dictated to the other groups on the choice of candidates to be invited. They also proposed a 'political truce' between the rival groups in Poland.

The Foreign Office asked the State Department to hold up these instructions while the matter was being discussed between the Prime Minister and the President. On the night of March 9-10 Mr. Churchill telegraphed to the President the British objections to the proposal for a 'political truce.' The Warsaw Poles would say that they alone could secure political tranquillity in Poland. We should have no means of finding out what was happening in the country and there would be a long period of delay which would suit the Russians since they could complete the process of liquidation.<sup>2</sup> On the following day Mr. Churchill sent to the President a full summary of information given to him by the Polish Government in London about the terrorist activities directed against Poles who would not support the Warsaw administration. Mr. Churchill said that the information was stated with restraint; the fact that we could not guarantee it showed the need for sending our own observers.

Mr. Roosevelt replied again on March 11 that our objectives were the same, but that in the American view a demand for a political truce was better tactics. If we asked only that the Warsaw Poles should stop their persecutions, the Russians would repeat their charge that the non-Warsaw Poles were also carrying out terrorist activities. The President agreed that we should ask for observers. The Prime

<sup>1</sup> For the text of these conditions, see Churchill, VI, 371-2.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the latter part of this telegram, see Churchill, VI, 372.

Minister replied on March 13 that he would defer for the time his message to Stalin; on the other hand he hoped that the President would agree that the instructions to the British and American Ambassadors should cover the five points in his draft. He said that, although he did not wish to make public a divergence between the British and American views, he would have to state in Parliament that the Yalta agreement had broken down, but that 'we British have not the necessary strength to carry the matter further.'<sup>1</sup> The President replied on March 16 that he accepted the first and third points in the draft. He did not think that M. Molotov would agree to point (ii). He was willing to include the Prime Minister's wording of point (v) in his instructions to Mr. Harriman, but continued to think that a political truce would be the best way of dealing with point (iv).<sup>2</sup> The President also agreed that we could not invite the Warsaw Poles to the San Francisco Conference.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile Sir A. Clark Kerr had drawn up, and discussed with Mr. Harriman, a draft communication to the Soviet Government covering as far as possible both the British and the American views. The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President on the night of March 16-17 that he liked the draft, and hoped that the President would accept it. Mr. Eden also instructed Lord Halifax to go through the proposals in the draft point by point with the State Department. The President and the State Department accepted the draft with some amendments; the Prime Minister agreed with the amendments, and the two Ambassadors therefore presented the communication to M. Molotov on March 19 in the form of separate but identical notes.

M. Molotov replied on March 23 with a long and argumentative memorandum repeating the Russian view of the right of the Warsaw Poles to prior consultation. The Soviet Government were 'astonished' at the intention to send British and American observers into Poland—'such a proposal might offend the national dignity of the Poles.' They suggested four 'rules' of procedure for the Commission: (i) they should recognise the Provisional Polish Government as the basis for a new Provisional Government of National Unity with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland and from the Poles abroad; (ii) they should begin consultation in the first place with representatives of the Provisional Government; (iii) they should summon for consultation

<sup>1</sup> For a close summary, and part of the full text of this message, see Churchill, VI, 374.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the greater part of the President's reply and another message from Mr. Churchill, see Churchill, VI, 374-7. Mr. Churchill had subsequently written (VI, 377) that he felt that, 'except for occasional flashes of courage and insight,' the President's messages at this time were 'not his own'. Mr. Hopkins told Mr. Eden and Lord Halifax on April 15 that hardly any of Mr. Roosevelt's recent messages had been his own.

<sup>3</sup> The Soviet Government had raised this question, for a second time, on March 9. See also below, p. 511.

those Polish leaders upon whom all three members of the Commission were agreed; (iv) they should then decide upon other Polish leaders whom they wished to consult.

After another inconclusive discussion on March 23 the Commission adjourned for three days. The Ambassadors prepared a redraft of M. Molotov's proposals, but the Foreign Office thought that the proposals should be rejected out of hand since they refused or ignored all the British and American requirements. Mr. Eden telegraphed to the Prime Minister (who was at General Montgomery's headquarters) that the time had come for a joint Anglo-American message to Stalin, and possibly for a statement in Parliament. The Prime Minister agreed, and asked the Foreign Office to draft a message for him. This message, which was sent to the President on March 27,<sup>1</sup> began by summing up the objections to M. Molotov's 'series of flat negatives.' The Prime Minister then referred to the news that M. Molotov would not attend the San Francisco Conference. Mr. Churchill thought that, if we could not get unity about Poland, which was one of the major problems of post-war organisation, the new World Organisation would have little chance of success. He therefore proposed a joint message putting the objections to M. Molotov's procedure, and asking Stalin to look again at the Ambassadors' communication of March 19.

The President and the State Department still thought that the best plan was to put to M. Molotov a redraft of his 'four rules,' but they agreed also that an approach should be made to Stalin. The President sent to the Prime Minister a draft of a message.<sup>2</sup> The Prime Minister accepted it with a few suggestions, to which the President agreed. Mr. Roosevelt sent the message to Stalin on April 1 and the Prime Minister supported it with a personal appeal to Stalin 'not to smite down the hands of comradeship in the future guidance of the world which we now extend.'<sup>3</sup>

The reports received from Poland at this time, though somewhat conflicting, continued to support the British view that the Warsaw Government had little popular support in Poland, and was not competent to deal with the administrative problems of the country. The Soviet Ambassador at Warsaw, according to information from the French representative, had admitted that the personnel of the government was second-rate. The situation was so very serious that a general rising might take place in western Poland within the next few months.

<sup>1</sup> For a summary, and the main part of the text of this message (which was sent in two telegrams), see Churchill, VI, 379-82.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the President's message, see Churchill, VI, 633-5. The text there printed does not include three additions made to the final draft.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the Prime Minister's message, see Churchill, VI, 382-4.

The rising would be suppressed, but the government and their Russian supporters were unlikely ever to win over a large section of opinion.

Against this sombre background M. Molotov continued to argue that the British and Americans were not keeping to the terms of the Yalta agreement. At a meeting of the Commission on April 2 he refused to discuss the messages from the Prime Minister and the President to Stalin, or to include M. Mikolajczyk among the Poles to be invited to Moscow for consultation. In a message of April 7<sup>1</sup>, however, to the Prime Minister accompanying a copy of his reply to the President, Stalin was willing to accept M. Mikolajczyk if he made a public statement accepting the decisions of the Yalta Conference and declaring that he stood for the establishment of friendly relations between Poland and the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> Stalin insisted that the Poles would regard the despatch of British observers into the country as an 'insult to their national dignity' in view of the unfriendly attitude of the British Government to the Polish Government. Stalin's message to the President repeated at length the usual Russian argument. He laid down, as the only way of escape from the 'blind alley,' an agreement (i) that the reconstruction of the Polish Provisional Government meant, not its liquidation, but its 'reconstruction by way of broadening it' and replacing some of its present Ministers; (ii) that only eight 'Polish personalities' should be brought to Moscow for consultation—five from Poland and three from London—and that they must genuinely accept the Yalta decisions and aim at friendly Russo-Polish relations; (iii) that consultation should be in the first instance with the representatives of the Provisional Polish Government; any other decision might be taken in Poland as an insult to the Polish people and an attempt to set up a government without consulting Polish public opinion. Stalin also suggested that the numerical relationship between the old and new Ministers should be that accepted in regard to Yugoslavia.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The reply was delivered by the Soviet Ambassador in London on April 10. It should be noticed that this correspondence coincided with the very sharp American and British protests to Stalin over the latter's charges of secret negotiations with the German High Command (see above, p. 483, note 2). The text of Stalin's message of April 7, with the exception of a paragraph referring to a message to the President dealing generally with the work of the Commission, is printed in Churchill, VI, 384-5.

<sup>2</sup> At the Prime Minister's suggestion M. Mikolajczyk made a public statement on these lines on April 15. Stalin, however, was still not satisfied because the statement did not mention expressly the decisions of the Yalta Conference with regard to the eastern frontier. The Prime Minister therefore sent to Stalin on April 22 a public statement by M. Mikolajczyk in which he said that the Poles ought to give way to the Russian demand for the Curzon line (including Lwow). For the text of M. Mikolajczyk's statements, see Churchill, VI, 426-7.

<sup>3</sup> This 'Yugoslav precedent,' as Stalin called it, had given formally 23, and in fact 25 seats out of 28 seats to the supporters of Marshal Tito and three to the supporters of the Royal Government (see above, p. 348).

In spite of the rigidity of Stalin's answer Sir A. Clark Kerr thought the proposals a sign that he did not want to break with Great Britain or the United States over the Polish question. Moreover the situation now changed owing to the death of President Roosevelt. The Soviet Government knew that the President had been able to keep in check criticism of Russian policy in the United States. They could not be sure that President Truman would be able to resist this criticism. Hence for a time they became more conciliatory. Stalin accepted Mr. Harriman's advice that (in spite of the announcement to the contrary) M. Molotov should go to the San Francisco Conference. Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman went to the United States (after M. Molotov had left) on April 17 in order that the three members of the Commission should be available for consultation.

## (ii)

*Joint message of April 18 to Stalin from President Truman and the Prime Minister: discussions with M. Molotov at Washington and San Francisco: the arrest of fifteen Polish representatives: Mr. Hopkins' conversations in Moscow: resumption of the work of the Commission: agreement among the Polish leaders: Anglo-American recognition of the new Polish Provisional Government, July 5, 1945.*

Mr. Eden had also left for Washington on April 14 when President Truman sent to the Prime Minister the draft of a message to Stalin. The draft pointed out that the 'real issue' was whether the Warsaw Government had a 'right to veto individual candidates for consultation.' President Truman proposed that invitations should be sent to MM. Bierut and Morawski, and General Zymierski from the Warsaw Government, Archbishop Sapieha, one representative Pole not connected with the Warsaw Government (to be proposed by Stalin), and MM. Mikolajczyk, Grabski, and Stanczyk from London. The representatives of the Warsaw Government, if Stalin wished, could arrive first. These eight Poles could suggest other names for consultation. The President did not wish to be committed in advance of this consultation to any formula for determining the composition of the new government, and did not regard the 'Yugoslav precedent' as applicable to Poland.

The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Eden that we should agree at once to these proposals. The Foreign Office, however, thought that they did not go far enough, since they applied only to getting the consultations started in Moscow. There would also be no representative from Poland of any of the four non-communist political parties.

Mr. Eden himself had telegraphed that we could not allow the Russians to choose the only 'non-Warsaw' Pole from Poland other than the Archbishop.

Mr. Truman accepted this change, and sent his message to Stalin on April 18. Meanwhile the Soviet Government announced their intention of concluding a treaty with the Warsaw Government. The Foreign Office regarded this treaty as totally incompatible with the spirit of the Yalta declaration. Mr. Eden, with the support of Mr. Stettinius, put the case to M. Molotov at Washington; M. Molotov, as usual, refused to be moved by any argument. Mr. Eden found the President and the State Department inclined to postpone talks with M. Molotov until the latter was in San Francisco; he persuaded them to allow at least a day for a discussion in Washington. The President said that he would tell M. Molotov 'in words of one syllable' the importance which he attached to the talks. Meetings were held on April 22 and—twice—on April 23, but no progress was made. The President himself saw M. Molotov on April 23 and explained that the United States Government could not go beyond the proposals in their message of April 18. He said that the failure of the three Allies to reach a just solution of the Polish problem would suggest serious doubts about their unity of purpose in regard to post-war collaboration. He hoped therefore that M. Molotov would continue conversations at San Francisco on the basis of the Anglo-American proposals.<sup>1</sup>

On April 25 M. Gusev brought to the Foreign Office Stalin's reply to these proposals. The answer was a reiteration of the Russian argument that the British and Americans regarded the Warsaw Government 'not as the nucleus of a future Government of National Unity but as one of several groups equivalent to any other group of Poles.' Stalin said once again that for reasons of security the Russians had a special interest in Poland similar to the interest of Great Britain in Greece and Belgium. He did not answer the British and American proposals about procedure except to say that he would now recommend the Warsaw Poles to withdraw their objection to M. Mikolajczyk, and that the British and Americans should recognise the 'Yugoslav precedent' as a model for Poland.

The Prime Minister stated once more, in a message sent on the night of April 28-9,<sup>2</sup> that he had gone to Yalta hoping to see both the London and Lublin Governments set aside in favour of a new government; owing to Stalin's rejection of this plan, we and the Americans agreed not to 'sweep away' the Bierut government, but to reorganise it as a new government on a broader democratic basis.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden was willing to postpone the San Francisco Conference for a few days until M. Molotov had agreed to the Anglo-American proposals, but the Americans thought this plan undesirable. The Prime Minister sent a message to Stalin on the night of April 24-5. For the text of this message, see Churchill, VI, 429.

<sup>2</sup> The text of the greater part of this message is printed in Churchill, VI, 431-4.



M. Molotov and the two Ambassadors were to try to bring such a government into being by consultations with members of the present Provisional Government and other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad. The new government was then to hold free elections. Owing to the refusal of M. Molotov even to give an opinion on the names put forward by the British and American members of the Commission no progress had been made.

The Prime Minister then explained that Stalin's insistence on the 'Yugoslav precedent'—which, in any case, did not apply<sup>1</sup>—meant that he was throwing over the whole agreed procedure. He told Stalin that we would not tolerate a Polish government hostile to Russia, but that we must also refuse to recognise a government which 'did not truly correspond to the description in our joint Declaration at Yalta, with proper regard for the rights of the individual as we understand these matters in the Western world.' The Prime Minister ended his letter to Stalin: 'There is not much comfort in looking into a future where you and the countries you dominate, plus the Communist Parties in many other States, are all drawn up on one side, and those who rally to the English-speaking nations and their associates or Dominions are on the other. It is quite obvious that their quarrel would tear the world to pieces and that all of us leading men on either side who had anything to do with that would be shamed before history . . .'

Mr. Eden telegraphed to the Prime Minister on the night of May 1-2 that Mr. Harriman and Mr. Stettinius were much pleased with the terms of this message. They were considering a plan, which they would submit to the President, if the message failed to move Stalin. They proposed, first, to tell M. Molotov in San Francisco that Stalin's message of April 24 did not take matters further, and that they saw no use in continuing the discussions. The situation created by the failure of the Soviet Government to accept the proposals of April 18, and their conclusion of a long-term treaty of assistance with the present unreorganised Warsaw Government was so serious that the British and United States Governments would have to consider their attitude.

Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr would then go to London to consult the British Government and also M. Mikołajczyk. They would tell M. Mikołajczyk that they did not think it possible to secure more than a third, or two-fifths representation of non-Warsaw Poles in the new government. They would ask him to name the Poles whom he would wish to have with him in the government. The Ambassadors—

<sup>1</sup> i.e. in the case of Yugoslavia the three Powers had accepted an agreement made by the Yugoslavs themselves.

having reached an agreement with M. Mikolajczyk—would put their proposals, as a *minimum*, to Stalin.

The Foreign Office did not think that this plan would succeed. Nothing had been gained from M. Molotov in the last interviews in San Francisco. He kept on asking that the Warsaw Government should be represented at San Francisco, and appeared to be thinking of a 'deal' in which we should allow Russia a free hand in Poland in return for the continuance of Russian non-intervention in our spheres of interest.

Meanwhile a new and grave crisis had arisen. The Foreign Office had heard earlier from the Polish Government in London that the Russians had offered to negotiate secretly with representatives of the Home Army and the Underground leaders of the four democratic parties. Fifteen of these representatives were given a guarantee of personal safety during the discussions. After meetings with Soviet military representatives at Pruskow on March 27 and 28 they disappeared. On March 31 M. Witos also disappeared. Sir A. Clark Kerr on April 4 asked M. Molotov for assurances about the safety of the fifteen representatives. A week later M. Molotov sent a letter that the Soviet authorities were 'overburdened with urgent work,' and could not answer enquiries about the arrest of 'these or those Poles.' Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed that we could not accept a rude letter of this kind, and that he should tell the Soviet Government that we expected them to give us the information for which he had asked.

After further enquiries had produced no information<sup>1</sup> Mr. Law told M. Gusev on April 30 that unless we could get information about the Poles concerned, we should have to state in Parliament that we could give no assurance about their safety. On May 3 M. Molotov admitted to Mr. Harriman that the Red Army had arrested sixteen Poles on a charge of anti-Soviet activities.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius saw M. Molotov on the night of May 4-5 and told him that they must refuse to continue discussions on Poland.<sup>3</sup>

On May 5 the Prime Minister received another message from Stalin rejecting the arguments in his message of April 28, and stating that the arrested Poles were being tried for anti-Soviet activities.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Churchill commented to President Truman that matters could hardly be carried further by correspondence, and that the three Heads of Governments should meet as soon as possible.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Stettinius and

<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Government also left unanswered enquiries from Sir A. Clark Kerr about the whereabouts of M. Witos.

<sup>2</sup> M. Molotov avoided giving this information to Mr. Eden. He said later that he had not heard from Moscow about the arrests until 6 p.m. on May 3.

<sup>3</sup> In his report of this meeting, Mr. Eden said that he had never seen M. Molotov 'look so uncomfortable.'

<sup>4</sup> The text of this letter, with two minor omissions, is printed in Churchill, VI, 435-7.

<sup>5</sup> See also below, p. 519.

Mr. Harriman suggested going on with the earlier plan to the extent of holding a meeting with M. Mikolajczyk in London and then discussing the matter further in Moscow. The Foreign Office, however, thought that M. Mikolajczyk could hardly be expected to support this proposal while his friends, and indeed all the 'non-Warsaw' democratic leaders, were in prison. The fact that the Americans could put forward the suggestion seemed a disquieting sign of weakening on their part, and of a risk that they might acquiesce in something very like the 'Yugoslav precedent.' Mr. Eden was therefore asked to tell the Americans that the Prime Minister regarded the plan as impracticable.

President Truman agreed with the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden that until we knew the fate of the arrested Poles we should stand firmly on the Anglo-American interpretation of the Yalta agreement. Within a fortnight, however, he decided to send Mr. Hopkins to Moscow on a special mission in the hope of reaching a settlement on the Polish question and generally bringing a *détente* in Russo-American relations.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Truman took this decision without consulting the British Government, though he was making it impossible for them to continue their policy of no negotiation until the imprisoned Poles had been released. Furthermore the fact that the President was willing to hold separate and independent discussions showed the Russians that the Americans were readier to make concessions—otherwise there was no reason for private negotiation.

Mr. Hopkins had his first talk with Stalin on May 26. He thought that Stalin really wanted to find a way out of the deadlock. Sir A. Clark Kerr reported on June 1 that Mr. Hopkins had had two more conversations. At the second of these Stalin suggested a list of 'non-Warsaw' Poles whom the Commission might consult. Sir A. Clark Kerr advised acceptance of the list, which included M. Mikolajczyk, on condition that something could be done about the Poles under arrest.<sup>2</sup> Stalin refused to commit himself to any concessions, but Mr. Harriman and Mr. Hopkins had the impression that he would go some way towards meeting their appeals.

President Truman telegraphed to Mr. Churchill on June 1 that Mr. Hopkins' conversations were 'very encouraging'; he asked that Mr. Churchill should try to persuade M. Mikolajczyk to accept the

<sup>1</sup> See also below, section (iv) of this Chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin said to Mr. Hopkins that most of the Poles had been guilty of the 'serious offence' of wireless communication with London. Mr. Hopkins does not appear to have argued that the British and United States Governments at least could not regard it as a crime for Poles in Poland to communicate with the legal Polish Government. Stalin argued throughout the conversations that the Polish Underground leaders were not only anti-Russian but were linked with British espionage agents. Here again there is no evidence to show that Mr. Hopkins questioned this view. In answer to a complaint from Stalin that Great Britain wanted to 'revive the system of *cordon sanitaire* on the Soviet borders,' Mr. Hopkins replied that such was not the policy of the United States. (Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* [Eng. ed.], II, 878).

invitation. Mr. Churchill at once sent a favourable though somewhat guarded answer.<sup>1</sup> On June 4, after discussion with M. Mikolajczyk, the Foreign Office telegraphed their views to Lord Halifax, together with a longer message<sup>2</sup> from Mr. Churchill to the President. Mr. Churchill was now less optimistic. He was willing to allow the consultations to begin even if we had not secured the release of the Poles, but he pointed out that the Russian proposals were not an advance on the Yalta agreement, and that by this time we should have had a representative Polish government. We ought not to give the impression that the Polish problem had been solved, or that the difficulties in the matter between the western democracies and the Russians had been more than relieved.

The Prime Minister telegraphed (on the basis of a Foreign Office draft) to Sir A. Clark Kerr on June 9 that we must not allow ourselves to be committed to any percentage such as the 'Yugoslav formula' (which had, in fact, turned out to be a fraud). The one 'absolutely essential requirement,' if Parliament and public opinion were to accept a settlement, was that the British Government should not be open to the charge of following the Munich pattern and, for the sake of Anglo-Soviet relations, imposing upon an unwilling Polish people a settlement agreed upon in advance among the Great Powers. We must maintain the position that the Moscow Commission had to act as mediators only, and to assist the Poles among themselves to reach a settlement. This settlement would certainly be 'based upon' the Warsaw Government, but 'so far as public appearances are concerned, it is one thing for the Poles themselves to reach the conclusion that such is the logical outcome, and quite another matter for them to be told before they begin their discussions that this is what they must accept.'

Although Stalin did not release any of the prisoners,<sup>3</sup> the Prime Minister persuaded M. Mikolajczyk to go to Moscow. At Moscow the Poles in fact reached an agreement among themselves, and announced it to the Commission on June 21. The terms were that M. Bierut would be chairman, and MM. Grabski and Witos members

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the illness of Mr. Eden the Prime Minister was at this time dealing with Foreign Office business. Mr. Eden returned to the Foreign Office on July 10.

<sup>2</sup> The text of the greater part of this message is printed in Churchill, VI, 506.

<sup>3</sup> The Poles were tried, and sentenced on June 21. General Oculicki, formerly acting Commander-in-Chief of the Home Army, was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. One prisoner received an eight years' and another a five years' sentence; three were acquitted, and the others given shorter sentences. During the trials the prosecution acknowledged by implication that the accused men had been arrested in spite of an invitation to them, under personal guarantee of their safety, to meet General Ivanov as the representative of Marshal Zhukov. The prosecution produced no answer to the question of the fate of the Polish detachments who had fought the Germans, and, in accordance with orders from London, had presented themselves to the Soviet Army. Mr. Churchill was much dissatisfied with the heavy sentences. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to suggest that an amnesty should follow the recognition of the new government. No such amnesty was granted.

of a Presidium of the Polish National Council which was to be regarded as the temporary sovereign body of the new Polish State. The reorganised Government consisted of twenty persons, including three new members from Poland, and three from abroad, with M. Morawski as Prime Minister, and M. Mikolajczyk (who was also Minister of Agriculture) and the Communist leader M. Gomulka as the two Deputies of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Eden instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr on June 22 that he could accept this settlement in his capacity as British Member of the Warsaw Commission, but that the British Government were not committed to recognise the new government until they were satisfied that it had been 'properly formed' according to the Yalta agreement, that is to say, until it was pledged to hold as soon as possible free elections in which all democratic and anti-Nazi parties could take part.

The Foreign Office wished to delay formal recognition until this pledge had been given; the United States Government thought it better not to ask for an assurance, but to include in the announcement of recognition a statement that the formation of the new government necessarily involved the holding of elections. The Foreign Office accepted the American view, and a formal announcement of recognition was issued on July 5.<sup>1</sup> Thus, at least formally, a long and bitter dispute was settled, though the question of the western frontier of Poland had still to be decided. To outward appearance the Poles had not been treated as the Czechs had been treated in the Munich agreement. In every other respect, however, the settlement was far indeed from being an expression of the free choice of the Polish nation. The chances that it would be followed by a free election were also very small. The Poles, the Russians and the Western Powers knew only too well the 'logical outcome' of a situation in which a majority of Communist Ministers, with Russian force behind them, would use their power to elude, and finally to extrude a non-communist minority, no matter how strong the support this minority might have in the country at large.

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<sup>1</sup> The President wanted to make the announcement on July 2; the Prime Minister telegraphed that we needed longer notice, since we had to take account of the position of the Polish Government and its officials in London, and also to give careful consideration to the attitude of the Polish army of 170,000.

## (iii)

*The Russian-sponsored coup d'état in Roumania: Marshal Tito's territorial claims and moves to establish a Communist dictatorship in Yugoslavia: the question of Russian unilateral action in south-east Europe: the Prime Minister's views on the urgency of a tripartite meeting.*

The Russian attitude over the Polish question—amounting, in fact, to a repudiation of the Yalta agreement—was the most serious problem in Anglo-Russian relations between the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. There were other instances, hardly less serious in their implications, of the disregard by the Soviet Government of their agreements. Within a fortnight after the Yalta communiqué the Russians brought about a *coup d'état* at Bucharest which must have been planned during or before the Conference. Early in December, 1944, General Radescu had formed a new Roumanian administration.<sup>1</sup> After a visit of leading Roumanian Communists to Moscow in January, 1945, an agitation was started against General Radescu and the non-communist majority in his Government. On February 24 rioting broke out in Bucharest; two days later, M. Vyshinsky went to Roumania, and insisted upon the resignation of General Radescu and the appointment of a communist-controlled government. The Russian action was taken without reference to the British and United States Governments, and was clearly against the wishes of most Roumanians.

The attitude of Marshal Tito both in his relations with the Western Powers and in the domestic affairs of Yugoslavia was also disquieting. Marshal Tito, having secured all that he needed, at least for the time, to put down internal opposition, attempted to 'rush' Yugoslav territorial claims against Austria and Italy. He refused to agree to Field-Marshal Alexander's plans to set up Allied military Government in Trieste and the western part of the province of Venezia Giulia,<sup>2</sup> Yugoslav troops entered Trieste and the zones of Austria allocated to British administration. They carried out severe measures of repression and confiscation in Venezia Giulia and the situation was for some time extremely dangerous. If the British and United States Governments allowed the Yugoslavs to anticipate by unilateral action the territorial decisions of the Peace Conference, they would be giving up all chance of a fair and legally determined settlement.

The Prime Minister was in favour of standing firm on the Allied requirements. President Truman, though recognising that the Yugoslav demands were a test case of the will of the Western Allies to

<sup>1</sup> The administration set up in August, 1944 (see above, p. 294) had resigned in November, but General Satanesco had formed a new Cabinet. His resignation in December was due mainly to communist attacks. General Radescu was, or appeared to be *persona grata* with the Soviet High Command.

<sup>2</sup> I have not dealt in detail with this question. The issues are set out in C. R. S. Harris, *op. cit.* They are also treated in *Grand Strategy*, VI, and in Churchill, VI, ch. XXXIII.



uphold their principles, was most anxious not to involve American troops in operations against the Yugoslavs, and thus delay their transfer to the war against Japan. The Prime Minister was justified in thinking that under sufficient pressure Marshal Tito would give way.<sup>1</sup> Marshal Tito, in fact, gave way.

Marshal Tito, on the other hand, was able to disregard his promises about the internal régime in Yugoslavia. The British Government had been willing to make allowance for the difficulties in the way of establishing a liberal order, after nearly four years of enemy occupation and civil war, in a country which had been previously under a dictatorial régime bitterly opposed by large sections of the population. Nevertheless, as time passed, there was little improvement in the administration of justice and little relaxation in the censorship of opinion. M. Subasic's attempts to get protection for the ordinary citizen against the tyranny of the secret police were resisted by the Partisan members of the Government. The Government was not a true fusion of the former Royal Government and Marshal Tito's *de facto* administration. The State was managed by Marshal Tito and the Partisans on the Russian totalitarian plan of superimposed committees nominated, in spite of the pretence of election, by the central authority. Yugoslavia was, in effect, a Soviet satellite; the Russians—and Marshal Tito—disregarded the Prime Minister's '50-50' arrangement. At the end of April, 1945, King Peter wrote to the Prime Minister complaining of the foreign and domestic policy of the new Government, and their failure to re-establish ordinary democratic rights. The Prime Minister's reply was an admission that our hopes and plans had not been fulfilled. He said that events had so far disappointed his best hopes: 'there is much which is happening in Yugoslavia that I regret but am unable to prevent.'

The British Government was thus brought up sharply against the question whether the Russians intended to throw over the policy of collaboration on the basis of the Anglo-Soviet treaty, and to dominate exclusively as much of Europe as their armies could reach, or whether their purpose was only to settle in their own way, and without regard to the wishes of the Western Powers, the security of their frontiers. In the latter case the Western Powers could do little or nothing to prevent Russian control of south-east Europe (outside Greece), and a refusal to accept Russian demands in this area might wreck the chances of collaboration in other matters.

The Foreign Office inclined to accept the Russian claims in south-east Europe, but to hold out over Poland, though indeed the argument

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill summed up his view in a characteristic minute of May 13: 'Once they recoil, they are beat. Principles prevail. It is easy to tell them later that all their grabs are in the soup at the Peace Table.'



that the Russians were in possession and could not be turned out applied not less in the Polish case than in that of the Danubian States. The reports from the Moscow Embassy, on the other hand, confirmed the view that, although the Russian demands were much harsher than had been expected, and the promises made at Yalta were being broken, there was no reason to give up all hope of co-operation once the Russians had carried out their plans for their own security. We could not persuade them to change these plans, but we might reckon that Stalin would not go beyond the limits of prudence. He would pay attention to our complaints when—and only when—we had a good case for saying that our legitimate interests were being disregarded.

Sir A. Clark Kerr, in an assessment of Soviet policy at the end of March, 1945, thought that the situation was 'disappointing, and even disturbing'; but that Russian 'recalcitrance' over Poland would not prevent the maintenance of a relationship with us considerably closer than that which had existed between 1907 and 1914. We had never asked of the Anglo-Soviet alliance 'any of the intimacies or the close understanding that would dwell in a like commitment with the United States or even with France,' but it would 'serve us well, and pay a steady, though not spectacular dividend.' A month later Mr. Roberts<sup>1</sup> took more or less the same view. He too thought that there need be no fundamental Anglo-Russian conflict of interests. We had to expect an attempt by the Russians to exclude us from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and even from Yugoslavia. We ought to assure, therefore, that our half of Europe remained the stronger half. We must shew the Russians that we intended to defend our interests, and that there was a limit beyond which they (the Russians) could not safely go. Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Roberts agreed that, as a first step in defending our interests, we ought to stop the adulation of the Soviet Union which had been going on for the past three years in Great Britain, and which misled the Russians as well as our own people.

The Foreign Office also considered the situation as it might appear from a Russian angle of view. The facts were not encouraging. Our own form of democracy had never established itself in central or south-eastern Europe outside Czechoslovakia. The population of these areas was now so much exhausted and impoverished—one might say, 'proletarianised'—by the war that they wanted secure and stable government even at the cost of political and private liberty. They were unlikely to fight for parliamentary institutions. If we tried to enforce our own form of democracy upon them, we should endanger our policy of cooperation with the U.S.S.R. over an issue which was not vital to our interests in Europe, but which the Soviet Government regarded as essential to their security. We had few economic interests

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. F. K. Roberts was at this time *chargé d'affaires* at Moscow.

in Bulgaria; our interests in Roumania were larger, and in both countries we were under an obligation to look after persons who had worked for us in the war and were now in danger from the governments in power. We were not concerned with the form of government imposed or elected in either country, and our opposition to the Russians was of no service to us, while it could not be effective in preventing them from exercising a final control in the countries concerned.

These estimates of Russian policy assumed that there was a price at which we could secure Russian cooperation. The Foreign Office was not unaware of another possibility, though they did not regard it as likely; the Russians might have come to the conclusion that Great Britain would no longer be strong enough to defend British interests, and that, in view of the unwillingness of the Americans to commit themselves to further intervention in Europe, the balance of power would soon fall on the Russian side. In such case the Russians could trust to their own strength to 'keep Germany down' and need not concern themselves with Anglo-Russian cooperation except on terms which might be altogether unfavourable to British interests.

The Prime Minister was less inclined than the Foreign Office to judge that the Russians had only limited objectives.<sup>1</sup> For this reason—and possibly also because he was more hopeful of the establishment of western democratic institutions in south-east Europe—Mr. Churchill refused to accept the extension of Russian control as an evil which we were unable to prevent. He realised that Great Britain could not check the Russians without American support, and that any effective resistance would have to be made quickly, that is to say, while Anglo-American military strength was at its maximum. Hence he wanted a meeting of the three Heads of Government at once; the British and Americans would then bring together all the questions at issue, with the threat that, if the Russians failed to honour their agreements at Yalta, the Anglo-American armies would maintain their ground to the limit of their advance.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill has written<sup>3</sup> that, if he had

<sup>1</sup> There is, perhaps, a parallel between Mr. Churchill's disillusion after Yalta and Mr. Chamberlain's attitude towards Hitler after the latter's breach of the Munich agreement.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill had favoured a more direct advance upon Berlin rather than the main thrust through central Germany upon which General Eisenhower decided after crossing the Rhine and encircling the Ruhr. General Eisenhower, without authorisation from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, informed Stalin of his plan on March 28; hence he could not easily change it even if he had wished to do so. In any case the United States Chiefs of Staff agreed with him that Berlin was no longer a particularly important military objective. In mid-April they supported General Eisenhower's proposal not to advance his troops in central Germany beyond the Elbe. President Truman refused to consider the Prime Minister's view of the political consequences of these military decisions. His only reply to a long telegram of April 18 from the Prime Minister was to send him the draft of a message to Stalin suggesting that the date and procedures of the withdrawal of the armies to their respective zones of occupation should be settled by mutual agreement.

I have not dealt in this chapter with the correspondence on the military aspects of the question. The matter is fully discussed in *Grand Strategy*, VI.

<sup>3</sup> Churchill, VI, 418.

accepted President Truman's invitation to come to Washington for the funeral of Mr. Roosevelt, he might have been able to put his views to President Truman. It is doubtful whether he could have done more in conversation than by letter. Mr. Truman intended to continue the policy laid down by President Roosevelt. In spite of his disquiet at the Russian breaches of the Yalta agreements, Mr. Roosevelt had been careful to avoid committing American forces to a long stay in Europe; he regarded himself as more likely than Mr. Churchill to influence the Russians, especially if he made it clear that he was following an independent American policy, and not merely supporting the interests and policy of Great Britain. Mr. Truman's way of dealing with business differed from that of Mr. Roosevelt, but he too was afraid of giving an impression of an Anglo-American 'ganging up' against the Soviet Union. Hence, so far from accepting the Prime Minister's plan to negotiate a real, and not merely a verbal settlement with the Russians while the western Powers were at their full military strength, Mr. Truman delayed a meeting of the three Heads of Governments, and meanwhile attempted a unilateral approach to Stalin.

On April 16 Mr. Eden and Lord Halifax told the President (they had already spoken in this sense to Mr. Hopkins) of Mr. Churchill's hope that he (Mr. Truman) would be able to pay a visit to London. They mentioned that Mr. Roosevelt had planned such a visit. Mr. Churchill repeated this invitation on April 24. The President seemed at this time willing to accept it. On May 4<sup>1</sup> and again on the following day Mr. Churchill telegraphed to Mr. Eden that the Polish question could be settled only at a conference between the three Heads of Government, and that this conference should be preceded by a meeting between himself and Mr. Truman. In repeating to the President Stalin's message of May 5 Mr. Churchill again referred to a tripartite meeting, and the need to hold firmly to the lines occupied by the British and American armies.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Truman himself telegraphed on May 9 that he agreed on the desirability of holding a tripartite meeting, but would prefer the initiative in proposing it to come from Stalin.

Mr. Churchill replied on May 11 suggesting that he and the President should invite Stalin to meet them in July somewhere in Germany outside the Russian military zone. He repeated his wish that the President should first come to Great Britain.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Truman's answer was, again, that he would much prefer to have Stalin propose the meeting, and that, if it were arranged, he and Mr. Churchill ought to go separately to it in order to avoid any suspicion of 'ganging up.'

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the telegram of May 4, see Churchill, VI, 438-9.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this telegram, see Churchill, VI, 437.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this telegram, see Churchill, VI, 496-7.

After the meeting, if his duties made it possible, Mr. Truman would visit England.

The Prime Minister realised that this message implied a certain difference of attitude between the President and himself. He replied on May 13 suggesting—on the assumption that the President might come later to England—that the tripartite meeting should be held in June. He did not expect Stalin to make any proposal: 'time is on his side if he digs in while we melt away.'<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill had already used similar terms on May 12 in another long exposition to the President expressing his deep concern for the future when the Russians alone might be keeping very large forces on active service,<sup>2</sup> and arguing again that we should hold the meeting with Stalin before our retirement to the zones of occupation.

President Truman replied on May 14 that he was unable to 'conjecture' what the Russians might do when Germany was 'under the small forces of occupation, and the great part of such armies as we can maintain are fighting in the Orient against Japan.' He was in full agreement that an early tripartite meeting was necessary. The Prime Minister answered on May 15 that he would 'take a chance of getting a snub from Stalin by sending him a telegram urging a friendly tripartite meeting.' Next day Lord Halifax reported that the President's advisers were coming to the view that the meeting should be held earlier than July 1 and that the President need not stay in Washington (as he had previously thought necessary) for the end of the fiscal year; they were also in favour of arrangements for a preliminary discussion between the Prime Minister and the President.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of another message from the Prime Minister about the urgency of a meeting, the President, in a telegram of May 21, did not go beyond saying that he hoped to have more information within the next fortnight about the date and place of meeting. The Prime Minister, however, was able to take the opportunity of a message from Stalin on May 23 about the disposal of the German fleet to refer to the general discussions which ought to take place between the three Heads of Government 'at the earliest possible date.'

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<sup>1</sup> For the text of this telegram, see Churchill, VI, 498.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this telegram, see Churchill, VI, 498-9. In this message Mr. Churchill used the phrase: 'An iron curtain is drawn down upon their (i.e. the Russian) front.'

<sup>3</sup> The President, however, had told Mr. Eden and Mr. Attlee that he could not leave Washington before July 1. Mr. Eden later asked the President what he meant by trying to induce Stalin to make the first move. The President said that the first of the two Ambassadors to return to Moscow should raise the question with Stalin.

## (iv)

*Mr. Hopkins' mission to Moscow and Mr. Davies' mission to London: the Prime Minister's failure to get President Truman's support for a tripartite meeting before July 15, 1945.*

One reason why the Prime Minister, in his reply of May 26 to Stalin, made this direct reference to a tripartite meeting, was the President's decision to send Mr. Hopkins on a special mission to Moscow.<sup>1</sup> Lord Halifax reported that the probable 'background reason' for the mission was a general nervousness over the difficulties with the Soviet Union. Mr. Roosevelt's 'grand design' seemed to be fading out owing to lack of initiative. The possibility of a visit to Moscow by Mr. Hopkins, who was regarded as 'the most eminent living repository of Mr. Roosevelt's policy' had been talked about vaguely for some time, though the decision had been taken abruptly, and had been hastened by the belief that the British general election would delay a three-Power meeting.

In addition to his hope of getting away from the dangerous *impasse* on the Polish question, Mr. Truman seems to have regarded Mr. Hopkins' mission as in some measure an attempt to mediate between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup> At all events the President sent Mr. Joseph E. Davies<sup>3</sup> on a mission to London at the same time as Mr. Hopkins went to Moscow. Mr. Davies saw the Prime Minister on the night of May 26-27. He told Mr. Churchill that Mr. Hopkins had been instructed to propose to Stalin a tripartite meeting, and that the President had in mind a meeting between Stalin and himself to which British representatives would be invited a few days later.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 512-3. Mr. Harriman had been warning the State Department of the danger that, unless American policy were firmer, the Russians would continue their programme of setting up communist States on their borders.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hopkins told Mr. Forrester on May 20 that he was 'sceptical about Churchill, at least in the particular of Anglo-American-Russian relationship,' and thought that the United States ought not to be 'manoeuvred into a position where Great Britain had us lined up with them as a *bloc* against Russia to implement England's European policy.' *Forrester Diaries*, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Davies had been United States Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. in 1936-38, and was a strong supporter of Russo-American cooperation.

<sup>4</sup> According to a later statement by Mr. Truman (Memoirs, I, 180-2) his intention was merely to have a chance of meeting Stalin before the discussions began. ('Since I was not personally acquainted with either Stalin or Churchill, I had intended that when we arrived at our meeting place I would have an opportunity to see each separately. In this way I would become better acquainted with them,' etc.) This statement does not explain why Mr. Truman wanted to have 'a few days' in which to become better acquainted with Stalin, but did not allow any time to become acquainted with Mr. Churchill. There is no doubt that Mr. Davies spoke as stated above in the text to Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Truman has also gone out of his way (ib. 181) to say that he (Mr. Davies) represented the policy and position of the United States with accuracy and that he carried out his instructions with exceptional skill. Mr. Truman also quotes from Mr. Davies' own report that he told the Prime Minister that the President wanted an opportunity to meet the Marshal 'before the scheduled forthcoming meeting.' He felt certain that the Prime Minister 'would appreciate the reasonableness of his position and facilitate such arrangement.' (Cf. also Sherwood, *op cit.*, II, p. 381).

The Prime Minister refused this plan. He sent to Mr. Eden on the morning of May 28 the draft of a note of reply which he proposed to give to Mr. Davies: 'If he desires to carry it back to Washington himself as a great honour, he may be allowed to do so. I have not formed the best opinion of the man.' If Mr. Davies objected to taking the message, the Prime Minister wished it to be sent in the form of a message from himself to President Truman. Mr. Eden agreed with the note, but the Prime Minister later on May 28 (or 29) toned it down slightly. In its final form the message was addressed to Mr. Truman and repeated the Prime Minister's wish for a tripartite meeting at the earliest possible date. Mr. Churchill regretted that London had not been chosen as the meeting place, but said that 'His Majesty's Government' would go to Berlin<sup>1</sup>. He then stated in strong terms that the British representatives would not 'attend any meeting except as equal partners from its opening.' Meanwhile, however, Stalin, in reply to the Prime Minister's message of May 26, had said that Mr. Hopkins had raised the question of a meeting; Stalin had agreed, and had suggested the environs of Berlin as a meeting place. The President also telegraphed to the Prime Minister on May 28 this proposal for a meeting in the Berlin area; on the following day Mr. Truman said that he was considering a possible date for the meeting and would telegraph again in the near future.

The Prime Minister took this message of May 29 to mean that the President had 'receded from the two-party beginning.' Mr. Churchill therefore decided to hold over for the moment his message of protest, 'as the thing may do itself.' Nevertheless he gave Mr. Davies a formal minute on the same lines, and largely in the same words of the draft, and also including a fairly full statement of British policy towards the Russian demands.<sup>2</sup> Two days later, Mr. Churchill telegraphed that he would be glad to know the date which the President proposed for the conference. He referred to his 'agreeable talks' with Mr. Davies, but said that he would not be 'prepared to attend a meeting which was a continuation of a conference between you and Marshal Stalin.'

The President made no reference to this part of the Prime Minister's message until June 7, after he had seen Mr. Davies.<sup>3</sup> He then tele-

<sup>1</sup> An incomplete draft of this note is printed in Churchill, VI, 502-4. The term 'His Majesty's Government' was correct, since the meeting might not take place or have been completed until after the declaration of the results of the British general election.

<sup>2</sup> This statement is included in the text in Churchill, VI, 502-4.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Davies' account of his visit could well have confirmed the President's suspicions of the Prime Minister's policy. The Prime Minister tried to explain to Mr. Davies that the differences between Great Britain and Russia were over matters of principle, and that the United States was not just dealing with 'two Foreign Powers of which it might be said that both were equally at fault.' Mr. Davies, on the other hand, reported that the Prime Minister was 'basically more concerned over preserving England's position in Europe than in preserving peace.' Mr. Davies also believed that the Russians knew, or at least suspected the Prime Minister's bitter hostility towards them, and that their knowledge, or suspicion, was 'responsible for much of the aggressiveness and unilateral action

graphed that he could 'readily understand' the Prime Minister's position with regard to 'the simultaneous character of the first meeting,' and gladly concurred with it. The Prime Minister, on his side, agreed, unwillingly—since he still wanted an earlier date—to the proposals of the President and Stalin that the meeting should begin on July 15. The Prime Minister, in his telegram of June 4 to the President about the Polish situation, again referred to 'the descent of an iron curtain between us and everything to the eastward.'<sup>1</sup> He had hoped for a settlement before the retreat of the American army to the line of occupation had brought Russian power into the heart of western Europe.<sup>2</sup> He wrote in a minute to the Foreign Office on June 18: 'It is beyond the power of this country to prevent all sorts of things, at the present time. The responsibility lies with the United States and my desire is to give them all the support in our power. If they do not feel able to do anything, then we must let matters take their course—indeed that is what they are doing.'

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on the part of the Soviets since Yalta.' Mr. Davies was startled at the vehemence with which Mr. Churchill spoke of the danger of communist domination, and at his unwillingness to accept the Soviet promises of good faith. He made the extraordinary comment to Mr. Churchill that he 'wondered whether he, the Prime Minister, was now willing to declare to the world that he and Britain had made a mistake in not supporting Hitler, for, as I understood him, he was now expressing the doctrine which Hitler and Goebbels had been proclaiming and reiterating for the past four years in an effort to break up Allied unity, and 'divide and conquer,' (Leahy, *op. cit.*, pp. 378-80.) See also above, Introduction, p. xxxix.

<sup>1</sup> See Churchill, VI, 523-4.



## CHAPTER XXX

From Yalta to Potsdam. (II) Abandonment of proposals for dismembering Germany: the Commission on reparation: the San Francisco Conference and the signature of the United Nations Charter

### (i)

*Sir J. Anderson's memorandum of March 7, 1945, on reparation and the dismemberment of Germany: abandonment by the Russians of their demand for dismemberment: the Commission on reparation: British proposals for the industrial disarmament of Germany.*

AFTER the appointment, at the Yalta Conference, of a committee to study the question of partitioning Germany the British Government could not postpone any longer a decision on the matter. Mr. Eden submitted a new memorandum about it to the Armistice and Post-War Committee on March 19, 1945. The report did not pronounce a judgment on the merits of the policy of dismemberment as such, though in listing the difficulties it shewed fairly clearly that the Secretary of State and his advisers continued to have doubts about the plan.<sup>1</sup>

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, had already submitted to the War Cabinet on March 7 a decisive paper on reparation and the dismemberment of Germany. This Treasury paper laid down certain conditions as essential to British interests: (i) We ought not to incur expense arising out of the supply of permitted imports into Germany while Germany was making reparation deliveries. Otherwise we should be paying for German reparation. We must therefore insist that any supplies necessary to put Germany in a condition to pay reparation should be a first charge on reparation and must be paid for by those receiving the deliveries. (ii) The permitted imports into Germany should be sufficient, but not more than sufficient to give effect to the Prime Minister's statement that the Allies did not intend

<sup>1</sup> The memorandum pointed out the difficulties of enforcing dismemberment against German attempts to evade its consequences, i.e. we should have to prevent the new States from setting up machinery for concerting a common policy or establishing a *Zollverein*. We should have to ensure that one German State did not interfere in the politics of another German State. We could not prevent each State from giving special facilities to visitors or settlers from other German States. The trade unions and churches would also be a problem. In any case we should have to begin by carrying out a number of measures regarding central planning and a central administration.

to leave the German people without means of subsistence. (iii) No 'once for all' deliveries should be taken from any zone of occupation unless the Allied Control Commission had decided, in agreement with the occupying Power, that they could be taken without risk of creating conditions contrary to the administrative interests of the occupying Power. (iv) An occupying Power should not be responsible for securing reparation deliveries beyond the limit judged by this Power to be within the capacity of its zone of occupation. (v) Except with the consent of all the interested Powers no equipment or stocks should be taken from parts of Germany detached from German sovereignty.

The paper then discussed generally the economic issues arising out of the surrender of Germany. These issues were considered under three headings: (i) the responsibilities of the British zone of occupation, (ii) reparation, (iii) dismemberment. (i) The British zone was not self-supporting in food supplies, and would normally draw them from Brandenburg, Pomerania, East Prussia, and overseas. For some time we should get little from the eastern zone or from the American zone in the south-west. Our zone was industrial, and would probably have a large number of refugees from eastern Germany. The zone would need relief imports, but we could not provide them from our own resources or buy them from abroad. Hence we must make our relief imports a first charge on German deliveries. (ii) Our short experience in a part of Italy had shown the enormous cost in which we should be involved if we had to maintain at our own expense even a minimum standard of living in the British zone of Germany. If the zone had been stripped of its capital resources, large sums would also be needed for working capital. Hence the importance of the third and fourth conditions that no Power should be required to secure reparation deliveries beyond the capacity of its zone. If Russia could claim that any deficiency of deliveries in the Russian zone should be made up to the agreed Russian share of reparation by deliveries from the other zones, our liabilities might be seriously increased.

The paper pointed out that the Russian proposals would give some economic security against a revival of German aggression by impoverishing the country for a number of years, but that these proposals would also impoverish the rest of Europe. The more we stripped Germany of her industrial equipment and enforced changes in her economy, the slower would be the return to higher general standards in Europe and the greater the rise of social disturbances in Germany. These disturbances would endanger the stability of western European political institutions, especially since Europe, at the best, would be in a very weak economic condition. Moreover, as the occupying Power in the most industrialised areas we should have to deal with the social disturbances, and our action would be open to misrepresentation in our own country and elsewhere.

(iii) The consequences would be even more serious if the Russian plan of dismemberment meant not only the transfer of part of eastern Germany to Poland and the creation of some special 'international system' in the industrial area of western Germany, but also the establishment of three or four separate and self-supporting States. The Germans would resist this plan, and the more dangerous elements would use it as a rallying-cry. Apart from the question whether the separate States could be given political stability and their separation maintained, we should have to deal with economic questions such as the prohibition of a common currency or a Customs Union between the separate States, and the position of unitary services such as transport and communication.

The American decision to withdraw their occupying troops from their zone within two years also affected the matter. If, on the plan for dismemberment, the United States zone were to become a new south-west German State, American interest during and after the occupation was likely to be limited to that area. The Americans might offer some permanent help for the area, but it was essential to us that American help should be given towards the solution of the economic problems of Germany as a whole, or at least those of western Germany. Thus, unless we maintained a unitary German State, both for reparation and necessary relief imports, we should have to meet a financial and economic liability which we could discharge only by making our own people pay not merely for the defeat but also for the revival of Germany. Many of these heavy charges would fall on us at a time when we should have to maintain an army of occupation, wage war against Japan, strengthen our garrisons, finance relief, and help to restore our damaged colonies and dependencies in the East. Even if some of this money came back to us later, the costs would have to be financed while our reserves were dangerously inadequate, and we were borrowing largely from poor countries to whose development repayment of our debt would be essential. If we had to assume that the Russian zone of occupation would gradually include the area of Berlin and develop into a governmental or administrative system amenable to Russian policy, we should at least consider whether there should not be a unified Western Germany which could be fitted into the general economy of the Western European countries.

The War Cabinet considered this report on March 22. They realised the force of the arguments that the Russians were trying to combine two incompatible aims—the maximum of reparation and the maximum of dismemberment—and that the result would be to leave Great Britain, in particular, occupying an area in the north-west which would require imports which the Germans could not pay for and we could not afford. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden were less sure that no form of partition was feasible; the Prime Minister came

back to his proposal for the isolation of Prussia. The War Cabinet decided to hold a further discussion. Before this discussion took place the Russians suddenly changed their view. The Soviet Government on March 26, 1945, told the Foreign Office that they understood the decision of the Yalta Conference regarding the dismemberment of Germany 'not as an obligatory plan, but as a possibility for exerting pressure on Germany with the object of rendering her harmless in the event of other means proving inadequate.' At their second meeting on April 11 the tripartite committee merely decided that, as soon as any of the three representatives had proposals to make, he should communicate them to his colleagues. No such proposals were brought forward, and the committee did not hold a third meeting. The term 'dismemberment' was not introduced into the Allied declaration regarding the unconditional surrender of Germany, though the possibility was covered by the words that the four Governments 'will hereafter determine the boundaries of Germany or any part thereof and the status of Germany or of any area at present being part of German territory.' Stalin put forward the new Russian view in a proclamation of May 9 that the Soviet Union was celebrating victory, but did not intend to dismember or to destroy Germany.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission set up to study the question of reparation did not meet until four months after the Yalta Conference owing to disputes with the Russians over its membership. The United States and Soviet Governments agreed to the inclusion of France as a member, but the Russians tried to bring in Poland and Yugoslavia. The United States Government would not accept this proposal, and the British Government considered, on April 9, that Norway or the Netherlands had stronger claims than Yugoslavia, and that there was as yet no agreement about a generally acceptable Polish representative. Finally on May 21 the Russians proposed that the Committee should work as a tripartite body. The Foreign Office wished to hold out for French participation, but the Americans were unwilling to do so.

The Commission thus met for the first time in the last week of June. The business which it had to settle before the assembling of the Potsdam Conference was the fixing of percentages for the division of reparation among the claimants. The figures agreed, after much discussion, were 56 per cent for the U.S.S.R., 22 per cent for the United Kingdom, and a similar amount for the United States. In order to satisfy the claims of other nations, each of the three Powers agreed to 'give up from their share in the ratio that each share bore to the total.' The British Delegation, in view of the heavier British losses, had tried,

<sup>1</sup> The French proposals for a 'Rhenania' also faded out. The Foreign Office received on April 12 a copy of a French memorandum on the question; the French Government had not approved the memorandum and did not say anything more about it.

unsuccessfully, to get the United States Delegation to agree to a larger figure for the United Kingdom than for the United States. Mr. Pauley, the American representative, refused to 'go home with the lowest figure of the three.' The British Government decided, reluctantly, to accept this American claim, in the general interest of Anglo-American relations, and also since they had reason to assume that the Americans would in fact release the bulk of their claim for the benefit of other countries. On the other hand, in order to allow the reduction of their share to meet other claims, and at the same time to maintain the share at 50 per cent, the Russian percentage was raised first to 55 and then to 56.<sup>1</sup>

(ii)

*Preparations for the San Francisco Conference: possibility of delaying the Conference: British views on territorial trusteeship and other matters connected with the United Nations Charter.*

The United States Government sent out on March 1, 1945, invitations to a 'founding conference of the United Nations'<sup>2</sup> at San Francisco on April 25. A serious difficulty arose at once over the representation of Poland. The British and United States Governments had not recognised the Russian-sponsored government in Warsaw; the Russians had ceased to recognise the Polish Government in London, and the new government envisaged in the Yalta Declaration

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office also drew up, before the Potsdam Conference, a general statement on the 'industrial disarmament of Germany.' They defined 'industrial disarmament' as 'the elimination, restriction, or control, in the interests of security, of the industrial and economic basis of Germany's war potential.' The measures envisaged did not imply the de-industrialisation of Germany; other forms of German economic activity might have to be encouraged as a complement to industrial disarmament. In August, 1944, the Armistice and Post-War Committee had already accepted, in principle, this policy of applying severe measures within a restricted field, and leaving the rest of German industry undisturbed. (See above, pp. 467-8). The E.I.P.S. had been asked to report in more detail on the industries which should be destroyed. (The destruction of all industries directly concerned with armament production was assumed.) The Foreign Office statement followed more or less the lines of the E.I.P.S. report, that the industries should include civil aircraft, merchant ship building, steel and machine tools (beyond the needs of 'peaceful domestic requirements'), ball and roller bearings, synthetic oil and certain chemicals.

<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office regarded the name 'United Nations' (which had been suggested by the British Delegation at Dumbarton Oaks) as somewhat inconvenient, especially since it was not easily translated into Russian or Chinese. 'Union of Nations' might have been a simpler term, but the United States Delegation thought that it appeared to denote too close an association of States. Mr. Eden considered that the Secretariat and permanent centre of the United Nations should be established in one of the smaller European States. He thought that, in spite of its association with the failure of the League of Nations, Geneva would be the best place, though the Russians would probably refuse to accept it or indeed any place in Western Europe. If the Russians would not have Geneva, Brussels, The Hague, or Lisbon, the Foreign Office suggested that we should try for Copenhagen, Prague, or Vienna.

had not come into existence. The United States Government proposed a public statement expressing the hope that the new government would have been formed before the opening of the Conference. In spite of a personal appeal from the President, Stalin refused this proposal, and was unwilling to include M. Molotov in the Soviet Delegation unless the Warsaw Government were invited.

At the beginning of April, the Foreign Office considered the possibility of a postponement of the Conference, but thought that delay might have a bad effect on American opinion, and even result in the rejection of the whole United Nations plan by the Senate. The United States Government, however, might suggest that, in view of the unexpectedly rapid collapse of Germany, it would not be practicable for the Foreign Ministers of the leading countries to attend a conference on the date announced. In these circumstances the United States Government might propose that the Conference should be limited to another meeting of experts. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, however, did not like this proposal; hence nothing was said about it to the United States Government.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Foreign Office had been considering the British attitude towards questions likely to arise at the Conference. In a memorandum of March 23, 1945, they pointed out that only nine of the forty-six States to be represented at San Francisco were European, while nineteen were Latin American. We ought therefore to try to secure early admission for such States as Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Spain (subject to a satisfactory change of government) and Portugal. There had been suggestions for countering the over-representation of Latin America in the Assembly by a system of weighted votes. This plan, however, was not practicable. The United States Government were considering whether they would ask for special representation to counterbalance the votes of the Soviet Republics; they had not found any suitable formula, and all their public statements emphasised the equality of States in the Assembly. On the other hand, we ought to resist any demand from the smaller States for an increase in the powers of the Assembly over security questions.

We had suggested in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals that regional agencies should be entitled to use force only with the approval of the Council. The French Government, with the Franco-Soviet pact<sup>2</sup> in mind, were thinking of proposing that such agencies could act merely after informing the Council, and without an obligation to obtain

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister expressed his view plainly that the Conference should be held whether or not the Russians attended it; 'the picture of all the United Nations, with Britain and the United States at their head, being put off their stroke by a mere gesture of insolence from Stalin and Molotov is a bad one. . . . I should without the slightest hesitation proceed to carry forward the Conference. *Les absents ont toujours tort*. Nothing would show the Soviets where they get off more clearly.' See Churchill, VI, 636-7.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 270-1.



subsequent approval. The Belgian Government also supported the right to act without prior approval, but wished to maintain the right of the Council to approve or disapprove. We ought not to give way on this point because we did not want to deprive the United States and Great Britain of influence on decisions in Europe.

The Foreign Office thought the smaller Powers would criticise the absence of any guarantee of the territorial integrity of member States; Australia and New Zealand, in fact, had already done so. We ought to remain firm on the matter since such a guarantee would not leave sufficient scope for treaty revision. There was also no guarantee of the political independence of member States. The reason was the difficulty of defining 'political independence.' A state might control the actions of another state by indirect means; a guarantee could therefore extend only to external and legal forms, and could not take account of these indirect methods. The United States and Soviet Governments had supported our view; Australia and New Zealand had asked for a guarantee. If they had general support, we should give way on the question, though we should have to take care that the wording of the guarantee did not commit us to recognising at once the full independence of India.

The Foreign Office had been surprised that no decision had been taken at Dumbarton Oaks to include any statement about territorial trusteeship in the recommendations at the Conference. The President and Mr. Hull had shown in earlier discussions that they were in favour of some kind of trusteeship;<sup>1</sup> neither of them knew much about recent developments in colonial government and administration in territories controlled by Great Britain and other European Powers. They also did not realise the practical difficulties in the way of international control. Mr. Hull had been more interested in the furtherance of free international trade than in political control, but he and the President were inclined to regard Mr. Churchill's vehement opposition to any proposals for 'trusteeship' as due solely to his wish to maintain an out-moded British Empire.

At the time of the Dumbarton Oaks meeting, however, American military and naval opinion had begun to think of the future of the Pacific Islands formerly under Japanese control. They wanted to occupy—and fortify—these islands without appearing to possess sovereignty over them, and thereby incurring the charge of 'imperialism.' On the other hand, any plan for trusteeship involving as its purpose the ultimate independence of the islands would be awkward for them. Hence, although certain members of the State Department did not give up their advocacy of the original plans for transforming the colonial possessions of the European Powers into trusteeships, the

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 440-1.



policy accepted by the President now seemed much closer to the British and French views.

The British Government felt that they had a strong case to meet the criticisms of non-colonial Powers. In December, 1944, Mr. Stanley submitted to the War Cabinet a paper setting out the principles of a system of international cooperation in colonial development which should satisfy American and other opinion and also safeguard the sovereignty and administrative authority of the responsible Metropolitan Powers. The War Cabinet agreed to send this paper to the Dominions, and possibly, after their replies had been received, to the State Department. On December 30, Lord Halifax telegraphed that the State Department had again raised the question of trusteeship and had pointed out that, although the question need not be settled at the forthcoming United Nations Conference, there would have to be some discussion about the former Italian colonies and Japanese-mandated islands. The State Department suggested that a preliminary Anglo-American discussion was desirable, and that Mr. Stanley, who was in the West Indies, might discuss the matter informally on his return through Washington.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stanley gave the Americans unofficially a statement of the British proposals.

The question was first raised at Yalta at an informal discussion—suggested by Mr. Hopkins—between Mr. Jebb and Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Hiss. Mr. Hiss thought that the British proposals were inadequate, and that all the colonial Powers should sign a declaration on colonial policy. He wanted the three Powers to agree that the subjects of trusteeship and dependent areas should be discussed at the United Nations Conference, and that provision should be made in the Charter to cover these points. Mr. Hopkins, however, advised Mr. Eden to wait until the President raised the matter; he hinted that the President might not go as far as some of his subordinates wanted him to go.

Mr. Eden warned the Prime Minister that the question might be raised at Yalta. He did not wish to make any commitment, but, if we had to agree to a discussion at the United Nations Conference, we should try to get Mr. Hiss' formula amended to read 'the subject of territorial trusteeship.' We should not then be committing ourselves to an extension of the system of mandates. Mr. Stettinius, however, used Mr. Hiss' wording in a proposal at a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries that the five Governments with permanent seats on the Council should consult one another on the subject before the United Nations Conference, and hold a later discussion at the Conference.

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister was irritated over the long-standing American pressure which took no account of British interests. He wrote at first a strong minute to Mr. Eden that we should not be hustled into declarations affecting British sovereignty: 'Pray remember my declaration in a speech of November, 1942, against liquidating the British Empire. If the Americans want to take Japanese islands which they have conquered, let them do so with our blessing and any form of words that may be agreeable to them. But "Hands Off the British Empire" is our maxim.'

The Prime Minister, at a plenary session, said that he could not agree, at any rate without consulting the Dominions, to make any British territory the subject of a system under which other Powers could criticise the work we had done in our colonies or call upon us to justify our administration. Mr. Stettinius explained that his proposal merely enabled the World Organisation to set up a territorial trusteeship if it so desired. The Prime Minister said that his objection would be met if it were made clear that the system of trusteeship would not affect the integrity of the British Commonwealth and Empire. The Conference agreed that it should apply only to existing mandates of the League of Nations, territory detached from the enemy in the present war, or any other territory voluntarily placed under trusteeship; that there would be no reference to particular territories at the United Nations Conference, and that only the principles and machinery of trusteeship would be formulated for inclusion in the Charter.

## (iii)

*The San Francisco Conference, April 25–June 26, 1945, and the signature of the United Nations Charter.*

The San Francisco Conference<sup>1</sup> opened on April 25 and ended on June 26 with the signature of the Charter. The opening days were difficult because M. Molotov first objected to giving the chairmanship to Mr. Stettinius, and then, after accepting a proposal from Mr. Eden<sup>2</sup> that each of the sponsoring Powers should take the chair in turn, tried once more to get an invitation for the Russian-sponsored Warsaw Government. A third dispute broke out over the Russian opposition to the admission of Argentina to the Conference.<sup>3</sup> Here also the Russians were defeated. From this time until the dispute over the interpretation of the Yalta agreement on voting, there was no serious and open division on a critical subject between the Great Powers. These five Powers, i.e. the sponsoring Powers and France, took care to reach agreement between themselves before bringing proposals to the general sessions. Since unanimity among the Great Powers was to be the basis of the Organisation, it would have been

<sup>1</sup> I have not dealt with the discussions at the Conference.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eden, who was accompanied by Mr. Attlee and Lord Halifax, led the British Delegation.

<sup>3</sup> The Americans were in a weak position on this question because President Roosevelt had told Stalin at Yalta that Argentina would not be eligible for membership of the United Nations unless she changed her policy. Mr. Stettinius, however, had agreed at an Inter-American Conference at Mexico City later in February to support the admission of Argentina. M. Molotov tried at San Francisco to 'trade' the admission of Argentina against that of the Warsaw Government.

illogical not to have secured it in the formulation of the original Charter.

In effect, apart from the addition of a chapter on trusteeship, there were few main changes in the Dumbarton Oaks plan. The Conference accepted the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace, and the limitation of the powers of the Assembly to discussion and recommendation in matters not being dealt with by the Council. The large powers of the Council were hardly even debated, because the small Powers concentrated their attention on a single question—the so-called ‘hidden veto’ of the Great Powers.<sup>1</sup> This controversy arose out of the provision in the Yalta formula that, while a permanent Member party to a dispute should not vote, unanimity among the four other permanent Members was required before the Council could take action with a view to bringing about a peaceful settlement.<sup>2</sup> Thus, if a dispute between France and Syria were brought before the Council, France would be debarred from voting on proposals to bring about a peaceful settlement, but these proposals would have to be supported by the other four permanent Members. It would thus be possible, e.g. for the United Kingdom, by withholding its vote, to prevent the Council from dealing with the dispute. In spite, however, of the efforts of the smaller Powers to get rid of this ‘hidden veto,’ the Great Powers refused to make any change in the Charter.

The British Delegation secured an amendment to the qualifications for election to the Council. This amendment provided that ‘due regard’ should be paid to the contribution of a State to security, and also to the need for an ‘equitable geographical distribution’ in the membership of the Council. The amendment was of particular importance to Canada, and was likely to be of general value to the European States.

The subordination of regional organisations and local security arrangements to the decisions of the Council was modified to meet Russian and American views. The Latin Americans—even more than the United States—were afraid that the clause in the Dumbarton Oaks plan forbidding action under regional arrangements without the authorisation of the Council might mean that the Russians could use their veto against action, e.g. by the Pan-American Union. The Russians on the other hand considered that the operation of their bilateral pacts with Great Britain, France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia might be subject to a veto. Hence a new article was inserted in the Charter asserting the right of individual or collective

<sup>1</sup> In a summary of the results of the Conference the British Delegation described this concentration on a single question as ‘a blessing in disguise.’

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the second stage in dealing with a dispute. The first stage was the hearing and discussion of the facts, and the third stage action for the enforcement of a decision.

self-defence in the event of an attack against a member State until the Council had taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

The most serious crisis over the interpretation of the Yalta formula came with the Russian insistence that a Great Power should have the right to veto discussion by the Council of a dispute to which it was not itself a party. The Russians argued that the decision to discuss a question was not a mere procedural matter, but one of great political importance since it might lead to a chain of events ending in the imposition of sanctions. The four other Great Powers opposed this view. Mr. Stettinius said plainly on June 2 that the United States Government would not sign a Charter which included this proposal. The Foreign Office thought that the only way of preventing a complete breakdown of the Conference over the matter was by personal appeals from the Prime Minister and President Truman to Stalin. The dispute was settled directly, however, through Mr. Hopkins who was already in Moscow. He spoke to Stalin on June 6 about it. Stalin (who had, apparently, not understood the difficulty) accepted the American view.

The five-Power 'consultations' over trusteeship suggested at Yalta did not take place. British representatives who went to Washington to discuss the matter in April were unable to make any progress owing to President Roosevelt's death. They were told that the President had not given any ruling on the differences of view between the State Department and the Service Departments. Hence the United States Delegation did not submit their proposals to the five Powers until the opening of the Conference. These proposals were based on American requirements in the Pacific Islands. The Americans suggested two categories of mandated territory. The first category consisted of territories designed as strategic areas; in these areas the functions of the World Organisation, including the approval and amendment of the trusteeship arrangements, would be exercised by the Security Council. All other areas were in the second category; the functions of the Organisation with regard to them were to be exercised by the Assembly working through a Trusteeship Council. It was thus likely that all the territories in which the United States Government were interested would fall into the first category, while the British Government would find it difficult in many important cases to establish their claim for the inclusion of territory in this category without clearly indicating a potential enemy.

The Foreign Office suggested that the British Delegation should point out that it was extremely difficult to draw a line between territories which should and should not fall into the first category; that

the strategic importance of territories was liable to change, and that the transfer of an area from the second to the first category might provoke international suspicion, and that, while the territories which the Americans wished to acquire were small islands, the territories under British control included large and populous countries which could not easily be divided administratively into strategic and non-strategic areas.

The arrangements made at San Francisco, however, were not unsatisfactory from the British point of view. The Americans insisted upon maintaining the category of strategic areas not subject to supervision by the Assembly and Trusteeship Council, but British defence interests were safeguarded by a clause allowing a State administering 'trust territory' to ensure that the territory played its part in the maintenance of international peace and security. It would therefore be possible to take all necessary defence measures without designating the territory as a strategic area. These measures would also be outside the supervision of the Trusteeship Council.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Russians and Chinese wished to insert in the Charter a statement that the ultimate objective for 'trust territories' and colonies generally was independence. With American and French support the British Delegation obtained a more limited statement that the objective was 'to develop self-government in forms appropriate to the varying circumstances of each territory.' The Russian Delegation also proposed that the Trusteeship Council should be authorised to 'control the fulfilment of their instructions and recommendations by sending their representatives and inspectors to the 'trust territories.' The British Delegation secured the rejection of this clause which would have allowed unlimited and irresponsible interference in administration.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### The Potsdam Conference, July 17—August 2, 1945

#### (i)

*Consideration of proposals for discussion at the Potsdam Conference: British support of an American proposal for a Council of Foreign Ministers: British proposals on procedure for the conclusion of treaties with the European enemy states: the question of the Polish western frontier.*

THE British view of the tripartite conference to be held in Berlin was that it would be at once a meeting to settle a number of immediate arrangements connected with the occupation of Germany and a test whether the Russians were intending to co-operate with the other great Powers in regulating the affairs of Europe. Hence at the end of May—when they expected a date of meeting earlier than July 15—the Foreign Office drew up a list of the questions which had caused or were likely to cause friction with the Soviet Government.<sup>1</sup> They sent this list on May 29 to the State Department in the hope of coordinating British policy, as far as possible, with that of the United States. The State Department had not replied at the end of June. The Foreign Office then sent a revised list to Lord Halifax. They also asked the Prime Minister whether they should shew the list to the Russians, and whether a preliminary meeting could be held with the Americans. They did not expect that President Truman would agree to anything like the discussions at Malta before the Yalta Conference, but there might be an exchange of views on an official level with a member or members of the State Department on their way through London.

The Prime Minister commented that no meetings could be arranged with the Americans before reaching Berlin, and that he did not wish any suggestion for a preliminary meeting to come from the British side. On July 4 a Reuter report (confirmed later by a telegram from Lord Halifax) announced that Mr. Davies was coming to London on a new mission. The Foreign Office did not regard him as the most suitable person with whom to discuss the agenda of the conference; they considered that we might suggest that a representative of the State Department should come with him. It was too late to make any arrangement of this kind, but Mr. Dunn, Assistant Secretary of State,

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office also pointed out the difficulties likely to arise during the discussions on Germany owing to the absence of French representatives.

said that he expected to be in Berlin on July 13 and would be free to discuss questions with the British Delegation on July 14.<sup>1</sup> On July 7 the State Department gave to the British Embassy in Washington their proposals for discussion.<sup>2</sup> The most important of these proposals was for the establishment of a Council of five Foreign Ministers—the United States, Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., France, and China—to deal with the urgent problem of peace negotiations and territorial settlements. This Council would draw up, for submission to the United Nations, treaties of peace with Italy, Roumania, Bulgaria, and, if the five Governments so wished, with Germany when it was ‘mutually agreed that a German Government adequate to the purpose is functioning.’ One of the principal advantages of the proposal for a Council of Five was that it would associate France at once with the three major Powers.

Mr. Winant communicated this proposal formally to the Foreign Office on July 8. The American argument was that the experience at Versailles after the first World War shewed that a full, formal peace conference was not the procedure suitable for getting the best results. Such a conference would be slow and unwieldy, and would give occasion for rival claims and counter-claims. The ratification of the resulting documents might be long delayed. On the other hand a formal peace conference limited to the three or four principal nations would almost certainly be opposed by the States not invited to it. The Council might also consider other European problems of an ‘emergency character,’ and for this purpose invite representatives of other States to take part in the discussion of matters of direct interest to them.

The Foreign Office thought that this plan had great advantages. They did not expect any difficulties about Chinese membership. They realised that the proposal would make the European Advisory Commission superfluous, but the Commission had almost finished its main work. The Foreign Office recommended that the Council should have a permanent seat and secretariat in London, though it might meet elsewhere, and that the Foreign Ministers should have specially appointed deputies, since they would have full-time work which could not be done adequately by local Ambassadors.<sup>3</sup>

The Foreign Office, before hearing of the American proposal, had already drawn up a brief for the British Delegation on the procedure for reaching a settlement with (i) Germany, (ii) Austria, (iii) Italy, and (iv) the Axis satellites.

<sup>1</sup> Sir A. Cadogan was able to meet the United States Delegation in the afternoon of July 14. Mr. Byrnes was not present at the meeting. Mr. Byrnes had been appointed Secretary of State on June 30, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> They had already given the list to the Russians.

<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office had in mind the delays caused by M. Gusev on the European Advisory Commission.



(i) Germany. There was now no German government or central administration. The country was under Allied occupation, and the four Allies had assumed supreme authority over it in a declaration signed at Berlin on June 5. Hence it was impossible—even if it were desirable—to conclude a treaty of the Versailles type without an indefinite delay. We should therefore have to impose our peace terms by Allied declarations. We ought to deal first with the most urgent problems—e.g. frontiers—without waiting for the result of discussions over reparation, etc. We should have to obtain at some stage the assent of the other Allies at war with Germany, possibly at a general conference when the various declarations might be brought together in a single document. As soon as a German government—or governments—emerged, we should require them to notify their formal acceptance of the terms laid down in our declarations; Allied recognition of a German government or governments would be conditional on such acceptance.

(ii) Austria. We wanted to encourage in Austria a sense of independence, and therefore to re-establish an Austrian administration and recognise a representative Austrian government. We ought not therefore to wait to make peace until the settlement of all the complicated issues about nationality, property, etc., between Austria and Germany; we could not decide whether to proceed by declaration or by treaty until we knew when an Austrian government would be recognised and what terms we should wish to impose on it.

(iii) Italy. The brief referred to the proposals for a peace treaty already before the War Cabinet.<sup>1</sup> On these proposals, Italy would cede all disputed territories, including the Italian colonies, to the four Powers, who would later decide about them. After the four Allies were in agreement and we had consulted the other Allies at war with Italy,<sup>2</sup> we could draft a treaty, and possibly hold a small inter-Allied conference. The Italians would be admitted at the later stage of the negotiations, and given opportunities for comment, but would be required to sign the treaty without any major change in the terms.

(iv) The Satellites. We had suggested to the Americans the desirability of concluding early treaties of peace with Roumania, Bulgaria and Hungary,<sup>3</sup> in spite of the fact that the governments of these countries were unrepresentative of popular opinion. The Russians were most unlikely to agree to any broadening of the governments; they would also continue to refuse to operate the Control Commissions on a genuinely tripartite basis, since on such a basis their repre-

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> On the British side the first stage would be consultation with the Dominions.

<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office (and the State Department) regarded Finland as in a different category. They also considered that in Hungary the Communists, although they had a greater influence than their numbers justified, were not yet in complete control.

sentatives would be in a minority. Hence the only chance of getting any real fulfilment of the Yalta Declaration was to conclude peace treaties which would lead to the withdrawal of at least the greater part of the Russian troops in the countries, and therefore to some relaxation of Russian control. We could also withdraw our representatives on the Control Commissions without loss of prestige and without proclaiming any serious divergence between the Russians and ourselves. The Americans, however, had not agreed with this plan; they thought that they might be able to persuade the Russians to agree to proposals for the reorganisation of the Control Commissions, and for the broadening of the three Governments. The Foreign Office considered that the American plan had no chance of success, but that we should let them try it, and, if it failed, bring forward our proposals for which we could then hope to get American support.

After submitting this brief<sup>1</sup> the Foreign Office heard (on the night of July 14-15) from Lord Halifax that the State Department were definitely opposed to any negotiations for a peace treaty with the existing Government of Roumania and were also opposed, though to a somewhat less extent, to negotiations with the Governments of Bulgaria and Hungary. It was uncertain whether they would support our plan for the conclusion of peace treaties if we brought it forward after their proposals had failed. Mr. Eden minuted this telegram: 'They [the Americans] are right.'<sup>2</sup>

In a note<sup>3</sup> of July 10 to the Prime Minister Mr. Eden summed up the Foreign Office view of our assets in bargaining with Russia. The list of 'things which the Russians want from us and which it is in our power to give or withhold' included:

- (i) Credits. The Russians would not be interested in credits from us of a size we could afford to give. They had asked the Americans for very large credits, and had been told that their proposals would need special legislation which at the moment was impracticable.
- (ii) Germany. We held most of the German fleet and merchant navy, a substantial part of German industry and industrial resources, including (in the British zone) 70 per cent of the German steel industry.
- (iii) Italy. The Russians had claimed one Italian battleship, one

<sup>1</sup> The brief mentioned certain other questions in south-east Europe, e.g. the Yugoslav-Greek frontier, and the future of Albania, which we could not allow the Russians to settle without our participation.

<sup>2</sup> On July 21 a minute on the brief noted that opinion in the British Delegation was 'hardening' against the 'peace proposals' and unlikely to suggest them. The writer considered that we might bring forward the proposals a month or six weeks after the Conference. If concessions obtained from the Russians had meanwhile proved valueless, we should have less difficulty in persuading the Americans to support our view.

<sup>3</sup> The note also referred to the Russian requests for access to the German archives, the greater part of which were in the possession of the Western Allies.

cruiser, eight destroyers, four submarines, and 40,000 tons of Italian merchant shipping.

(iv) The Straits. We had promised to consider sympathetically, but were not committed to Russian proposals for a modification of the Montreux Convention. We were even less committed to proposals about Russian access to the Baltic and a share in the control of the Kiel Canal.

These bargaining assets were not likely to be of much value in getting the Russians to change their policy with regard to the extension of Polish territory in the west. The Foreign Office had been troubled since the Yalta Conference over Russian permission to their puppet Polish Provisional Government to extend Polish administration up to the line of the western Neisse. The area handed over to the Poles had been one of the main sources of German grain supplies. The Poles were likely to withhold these supplies, and also to refuse to send coal from Silesia. The Western Allies would thus have to meet the needs of a starving population greatly increased by refugees; the task would be most severe in the devastated industrial areas of the Ruhr. In the latter part of March and again in May the Foreign Office had called the attention of the Soviet Government to the agreements that the zones of occupation were to cover 'Germany within her frontiers as they were on December 31, 1937,' and that members of the Control Council would jointly exercise supreme authority on matters affecting Germany as a whole. The Russian assurances were unsatisfactory. The Foreign Office therefore thought that we should have to raise the matter at Potsdam. The Poles and Russians had now committed themselves to the Oder-western Neisse line, and the Soviet Government were disregarding the four-Power agreement which defined the authority to be exercised by the Control Council. If we did not resist these actions now, we should get more demands from the Russians. We ought therefore to say clearly that we could not accept the right of the Russians to place part of their zone outside the authority not only of the Control Council but of the Soviet Commander-in-Chief. We should propose, as a reasonable western frontier for Poland, Danzig and East Prussia south and west of Königsberg, the Oppeln district of Silesia, and the eastern part of Pomerania. If the Soviet Government insisted on handing over parts of Germany to Poland without our consent, we should have to be equally firm about reducing the proportionate Russian share of reparations. If necessary, we should tell the Soviet Government that we would allow them no reparation deliveries from the British and American zones unless they accepted our requirements.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office telegraphed a statement on these lines to the State Department on the night of July 12-13.

## (ii)

*The opening of the Conference: acceptance of the American proposal for a Council of Foreign Ministers: failure to reach agreement on the western frontier of Poland and supplies from the territory under Polish administration.*

President Truman, who was elected chairman of the plenary sessions at the Potsdam Conference,<sup>1</sup> introduced the American proposal for a Council of Foreign Ministers at the first session on July 17. The British Delegation had agreed to support the proposal, and the Russians had no reason to oppose it. M. Molotov suggested that France ought not to take part in the preparation of treaties with countries with which she had not signed an armistice; Mr. Byrnes answered that the United States Government had not been at war with Finland, but had views about the Finnish treaty, and that there was a case for giving similar weight to French views about the treaties with Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland. The Conference agreed that there was no need to continue the European Advisory Commission; Mr. Eden pointed out that a decision to abolish it required the consent of the French. The Conference agreed that the new Council should meet in London, and that their first meeting should be held on September 1.<sup>2</sup>

The discussions on the more contentious business were much less satisfactory. They ranged from subject to subject because the main issues were so closely connected. The British and Americans refused to consider the question of reparation apart from the immediate problem of finding the Germans in the western zones sufficient means to live without external assistance. The settlement of the German-Polish frontiers was relevant to these two questions, since the food supplies of the western industrial areas were drawn largely from the territory claimed by Poland which the Russians had already handed over to Polish administration. The Russians widened the discussion on an Italian peace treaty and the admission of Italy to the United Nations into a general proposal for giving similar treatment to the former satellite states of south-east Europe. This proposal in turn had a direct bearing on the British and American demands for a loyal fulfilment by the Russians of the Declaration on Liberated Europe.

<sup>1</sup> There were thirteen plenary sessions of the Conference, and eleven formal meetings of Foreign Secretaries. Mr. Byrnes called an informal meeting of Foreign Secretaries on July 23 to discuss German reparation. Mr. Attlee, at Mr. Churchill's invitation, attended the Conference as a member of the British Delegation in the period before the declaration of the results of the British general election. After Mr. Eden had left the Conference, and before the arrival of Mr. Bevin as Foreign Secretary in the new Administration, Sir A. Cadogan acted as deputy for the British Foreign Secretary, and in this capacity attended two meetings of the Foreign Secretaries.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill said that 'London had been the capital most under fire, and longest in the war. It had claims to be the largest city in the world and one of the oldest, and, moreover, it was more nearly halfway between the United States and Russia than any other place in Europe.' Stalin answered that 'this counted more than any other factor.'

The conclusion of treaties with the satellite States would have implied recognition of their governments; the Western Powers wanted to refuse recognition until they were satisfied that the governments were freely chosen and genuinely independent. The Russians—since it was now obvious that they would not allow free elections or genuine independence in the countries concerned—attempted a political counter-attack by complaining of the state of affairs in Greece, and by allegations that the Western Allies themselves—and particularly the British—were not fulfilling their engagements.

A meeting between Mr. Churchill and Stalin on the second evening of the Conference<sup>1</sup> shewed the 'offensive-defensive' line which the Russians intended to take.<sup>2</sup> Stalin—with other elections in his mind—thought that the sending of observers to Greece during the elections would shew a lack of confidence in the honesty of the Greek people. He maintained that Russian policy in the countries liberated by the Red Army was directed towards the establishment of strong, independent, sovereign States. He did not want to 'Sovietise' these countries, and would allow free elections in which all except fascist parties could take part. He protested against Mr. Churchill's complaints that, instead of the agreed '50-50' arrangement, the Russians had a 99 per cent control of Yugoslavia. He said that he had been 'hurt' by the American demand for a change of government in Roumania and Bulgaria, where 'everything was peaceful.'

Mr. Churchill introduced the subject of Poland at the first plenary meeting of the Conference on July 17.<sup>3</sup> He said that there had been a substantial improvement in the Polish situation, but that various aspects of the problem ought to be discussed, e.g. the holding of free elections at an early date, the disposal of the former Polish Government in London, and the treatment of Poles who had fought with the United Nations under the protection of the British Government and from a base in the United Kingdom.

Stalin made no comment on the Prime Minister's statement. On the following day he mentioned a statement on Poland drafted by the Soviet Delegation to the effect that all the assets of the former Government should be transferred to the Provisional Government, and that

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of this conversation (which went on for five hours), see Churchill, VI, 548-51.

<sup>2</sup> The Russians misinterpreted British and American action at almost every point. Thus they complained that 10,000 alleged Soviet citizens who were prisoners of war under British control in Italy were being organised in a division under officers who had served in the German Army. The facts were that, among the million prisoners of war recently taken in Italy, there were some 10,000 men in the camp of which the Russians were complaining. Most of them were Ukrainians who were not Russian nationals; a number were Poles not domiciled within the 1939 Russian frontiers. The Russian Mission in Rome had full access to the camp and were 'sifting' the men; 665 wanted to go back to Russia, and would be allowed to go. The Russians made equally ill-informed complaints that the British military authorities had not disarmed 400,000 Germans in Norway.

<sup>3</sup> For a summary of the discussions on Poland at the Conference up to July 25, see Churchill, VI, 563-81.

the latter should have authority over all Polish armed forces. On this last question the Prime Minister said that the Poles had fought with great bravery and good discipline. They were now in a state of grave mental and moral distress. We hoped that the majority would wish to return to Poland; we would keep in Great Britain any who did not wish to go back. Mr. Eden brought forward a revised draft of the Soviet statement at a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries on July 19. The Russians contested the wording of the new draft. They objected to a clause that the Polish Provisional Government should acknowledge liability for credits advanced to the London Government. They were unwilling to use the word 'pledge' in regard to elections; they described a reference to the freedom of the press to report on the elections as a slur on the Polish Government, and argued that such freedom already existed. The Soviet Delegation also submitted a memorandum supporting the Polish claim to a frontier along the line of the western Neisse and the Oder to the sea west of Swinemünde and including Stettin in Poland. President Truman on July 21 said that, according to the Yalta agreement, the final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should take place at the Peace Conference, and that the Soviet Government ought not to have given a zone of administration to the Poles without consulting the British and United States Governments. Stalin argued that at Yalta the three Heads of Governments had decided to ask the Polish Government how much territory they wanted. The Polish Government had now stated their view, and the Conference might now express an opinion in sympathy with them, though the final settlement would not take place until the Peace Conference. The Polish administration had been admitted because the Germans had left the area with the retreating German armies.

President Truman repeated his view that the frontier question should not be settled until the Peace Conference; meanwhile he did not object to the use of a Polish administration in the Soviet zone. The Prime Minister, however, doubted whether the frontier could remain unsettled since the matter seriously affected the question of food supplies. If the Polish demands which the Soviet Government were supporting were accepted in full, Germany would lose a quarter of the arable land within her 1937 frontiers, and some 8½ to 9 million Germans would have to be moved.<sup>1</sup> This transfer would be on far too large a scale. The British Government took their stand on the general principle that the surplus of food and fuel from the area within the 1937 frontiers of Germany should remain available to the whole of the German people within these frontiers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stalin maintained that all the Germans had left the area between the Vistula and the Oder. The Poles themselves admitted that 1 to 1½ million Germans still remained, though they (the Poles) expected that these Germans would be willing to leave.

<sup>2</sup> See also below, pp. 547-8.



On July 22 Stalin proposed that the Polish demands should be accepted. The Prime Minister repeated the reasons why the British Government could not agree to them. Stalin suggested that representatives of the Polish Provisional Government might come to the Conference to state their views. At the invitation of the Conference, therefore, a Polish Delegation including M. Bierut and M. Mikolajczyk arrived in Potsdam. They stated their case—with strong Russian support (though the matter was not being argued at the meeting)—to the Foreign Secretaries in the morning of July 24. Mr. Byrnes summed up this case at a plenary session in the afternoon, and the Conference decided to adjourn the discussion until a later meeting. Meanwhile before the plenary session the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had a discussion with the Polish Delegation. Mr. Churchill told them of the British doubts whether Poland could absorb so much territory, and the difficulties about food supplies to Germany. He warned the Poles not to repeat in the west their previous mistake in the east. M. Bierut brought forward the arguments which he had used at the meeting of Foreign Ministers.

Mr. Churchill also appealed to the Poles to allow full freedom for the Polish political parties and for the Allied press before and after the elections. Later on July 24 Mr. Eden had another talk with M. Bierut, M. Mikolajczyk and two other members of the Delegation. M. Bierut would not give way about the frontier, and argued that everything would be well about the elections. He said that, if the great Allies carried their interest in Polish affairs to the extent of bringing pressure to bear on the Poles, they would be encroaching on Polish sovereignty.

On the following morning the Prime Minister saw M. Bierut alone.<sup>1</sup> M. Bierut claimed that the policy of the Polish Government was not towards a communist or sovietised Poland, but towards the forms of democratic life current in western Europe. He suggested that the Polish elections would probably be even more 'democratic' than those in Great Britain. The Prime Minister said again that the Poles were asking for too much territory; we had been ready to support their

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden and Sir A. Clark Kerr also saw M. Mikolajczyk on the morning of July 25. M. Mikolajczyk described much of M. Bierut's talk about freedom of elections as 'non-sense.' He said that the position had changed for the worse during the last ten days. M. Bierut had gone back on many of his undertakings, and was clearly aiming at the establishment of a one-party system, though in a free election the Communists would not get more than one per cent of the votes. After Mr. Eden had left for a meeting M. Mikolajczyk continued the conversation with Sir A. Clark Kerr. He said that Poland would be able to establish her independence only if the elections were held without delay, and that the holding of the elections depended on the fixing of the frontiers and the withdrawal of the Red Army from Polish territory. He argued in favour of the claim to the western Neisse frontier. He said that Poland could fill the areas for which she asked. Two out of the eight million inhabitants were already Polish; one million could be made up of emigrant agricultural labourers from Poland; four million would consist of the Polish population of the territory annexed in the east by Russia. There was also a surplus population in central Poland.



claims up to the Oder at some points, but not along its whole length.

At the plenary session on July 25 the Prime Minister mentioned these discussions with the Poles. He said that the question of the Polish western frontier could not be settled without taking into account the large number of Germans still in the disputed area, and without reference to the questions of reparation, occupational zones, etc., which were still undecided. President Truman agreed with the Prime Minister. He said that he and Mr. Byrnes had also seen the Poles, and that Mr. Byrnes was to have further talks with them. The best course was therefore to postpone a discussion until the next plenary meeting. Meanwhile, if Poland were to become a fifth occupying Power, the Polish Government must be made properly responsible for the area under their occupation, while the final delimitation of frontiers must be left to the Peace Conference.

The Prime Minister said that the Conference would have failed if Poland were allowed to assume the position of a fifth occupying Power without any arrangements for sharing the food produced in Germany equally over the whole German population, and if there were no agreement on a reparation plan or a definition of war booty. The Prime Minister hoped that a broad agreement might be reached on 'this network of problems lying at the very heart of their work.' So far, however, they had made no progress towards such an agreement.

Stalin said that the question of obtaining for the rest of Germany supplies of coal and metals from the Ruhr was even more important than the question of food supplies. The Prime Minister answered that supplies from the Ruhr for the Russian zone of Germany or for Poland would have to be bartered against food from these areas. He could not agree that the Soviet Government had the right to dispose unconditionally of all supplies in the Russian zone and to the east of it, and at the same time to share in the products from other zones. After more discussion on these lines the Conference again adjourned a decision.

During the night of July 24-25 the Foreign Office forwarded to Mr. Eden a telegram of July 23 from Mr. Hankey at Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hankey had attended meetings of the Polish National Home Council on July 21-22 and a public demonstration on July 22. He described the Council as 'not a people's democratic assembly, but a voting machine carefully parked on them.' The public demonstration consisted almost entirely of Communists 'with a carefully arranged *claque* of speaking choruses.' Mr. Hankey's general conclusion was that at present things were 'moving in the wrong direction.'

In the afternoon of July 25 Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden left for England. They resigned on the following day after the declaration

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. R. M. A. Hankey had been appointed *chargé d'affaires* with the Polish Provisional Government. He arrived in Warsaw on July 14.

of the results of the British general election. Mr. Attlee, who had also returned to England, arrived back in Berlin with Mr. Bevin, the new Foreign Secretary, for a plenary session of the Conference in the late evening of July 28. The Polish question was not discussed at this meeting, and a plenary session arranged for July 29 had to be postponed until July 31 owing to the illness of Stalin. No meetings of the Foreign Secretaries were held on July 29.

(iii)

*Failure to reach agreement in the Conference over the questions of reparation and the economic treatment of Germany.*

When the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden left the Potsdam Conference there was also a serious disagreement between the Russians and the western Powers over the treatment of Germany. The United States Delegation had circulated a comprehensive memorandum containing (i) the draft of an agreement on the political and economic principles which should govern Allied action in the initial period of control, and (ii) proposals for German reparation. The Conference accepted without much debate the main principles set out under (i) in the American draft. In the text as approved the purposes of the Allied occupation were described as, primarily, the complete disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany, and the elimination or control of all German industry which could be used for military production. The Allies also wished (i) to convince the German people that they could not escape responsibility for the destruction which they had brought upon themselves, (ii) to destroy the National Socialist party and organisation, and (iii) to prepare for the reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis. The administration of German affairs would be 'directed towards the decentralisation of the political structure and the development of local responsibility . . . For the time being, no central German government' would be established.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the plenary meeting on July 31 the British Delegation suggested the addition of the words, 'Notwithstanding this, however, certain essential central German administrative departments, headed by State Secretaries, shall be established, particularly in the fields of finance, transport, communications, foreign trade and industry. Such departments will act under the direction of the Control Council.' The Russians had already put forward an addition on similar lines, though in a more complicated form. The Conference accepted the British wording. The British Delegation also proposed two additions to the statement on principles: (i) that so far as was practicable there should be uniformity of treatment of the civilian population throughout Germany, (ii) that, subject to normal regulations, the nationals of the Powers represented on the Control Council should have free circulation in all zones by land and air. The British and American representatives on the Economic Committee of the Conference had first made these proposals on the Committee, but the Soviet representative had regarded them as political matters. The Conference accepted the first proposal, and referred the second to the Control Commission.

Mr. Byrnes suggested at the first meeting of the Foreign Secretaries the appointment of an Economic Committee to survey the economic problems of Germany, and—significantly—‘to define the issues on which agreement could not be reached among members of the Delegation staffs.’ Here again there was general consent to most of the principles to be applied in destroying German economic capacity for aggression. The contentious issues, however, were those affecting German reparation, and the immediate question of supplies. The British and American representatives proposed that each of the zones of occupation, including the greater Berlin area, should draw its supplies from the regions of Germany which had provided them before the war. The Conference had already agreed that ‘Germany’ meant the Germany of 1937, though Stalin asked for the deduction of the territories lost in 1945.

The Russians refused to accept the Anglo-American proposal until the Conference had decided upon the frontiers of Germany; in other words they wanted to exclude the area which they had handed over to Polish administration. They also maintained their previous refusal to agree that ‘the necessary means must be provided for the payment of imports approved by the Governments concerned before reparation deliveries are made from current production or stock.’

At a discussion of the report of the Committee on July 22 M. Molotov tried to qualify the proposal that during the period of occupation Germany should be treated as an economic unit. He offered later to withdraw his opposition if the British and Americans would agree to withdraw their demand about the provision of supplies. Mr. Eden and Mr. Byrnes refused this ‘bargain.’ M. Molotov also proposed as a substitute for the clause on priorities, a new formula which would allow any deficiency in German production to be divided in such a way as to fall equally on exports and reparation deliveries. Mr. Eden and Mr. Byrnes pointed out that this plan would merely put on one or more of the Powers the burden of supplying a part of the ‘necessary imports’ of Germany without payment. The Soviet Delegation also submitted to the Conference on July 23 two memoranda on reparation. The first repeated the proposals made by the Russians at Yalta, and the second suggested that, until the establishment of a permanent reparation agency, removals in kind should be based upon the urgency of need of nations which had suffered from German action.

In the afternoon of July 23, at Mr. Byrnes’ suggestion, the Foreign Ministers met informally to discuss their differences over reparation and supplies. Mr. Byrnes asked M. Molotov about the removals which were already taking place in the Russian zone. M. Molotov said that perhaps about 300 million dollars worth had already been removed; the Russians would now reduce their total claim from

10000 to 9000 million dollars. Mr. Byrnes, with the agreement of Mr. Eden, protested that the Russians were proposing to give Poland 20 per cent of the amount considered at Yalta as available for general reparations.<sup>1</sup> He said that the figure of 9000 million dollars was meaningless. This figure had been taken at Yalta only as a basis of discussion; since that time the Allied armies had moved into Germany, and thousands of millions of dollars' worth of property had been destroyed in air bombardment. M. Molotov then reduced his figure to a possible 8000 million dollars. Mr. Byrnes made a new suggestion that the Russians should collect their reparation from their own zone; the British, French and Americans should also do so from their respective zones, and undertake to pay out of the amount collected the claims of Belgium, the Netherlands, and the other United Nations. M. Molotov said that the Russians could not agree to this plan unless they received about 2000 or 3000 million dollars' worth of machinery from the Ruhr. Mr. Eden asked what the Russians would do to make good the supplies of food and coal formerly supplied from the areas allocated to Poland. M. Molotov said that the question must be discussed.

At another meeting on July 27 Mr. Byrnes, M. Molotov and Sir A. Cadogan went over the argument again. M. Molotov said that the United States Government seemed to have gone back on their assumption of a figure of 20,000 million dollars for reparation. Mr. Byrnes repeated that this figure had been taken only as a basis of discussion, and no longer applied, and that the Russians had already seized a great deal of the plant and equipment from which reparation could be paid; for example, they had stripped almost all the machinery from the International Telegraph and Telephone Company and four other plants in Berlin.

### Note to section (iii)

#### *Russian claims with regard to the German navy and merchant fleet.*

In addition to their reparation demands, the Soviet Government also asked for a third of the German navy and merchant fleet. Mr. Churchill pointed out with regard to the German war fleet that the question of Allied losses was relevant to a fair division, and that Great Britain had lost some ten capital ships, twenty cruisers, and hundreds of small craft. Mr. Churchill proposed that most of the German U-boats should be destroyed, and that the German merchant fleet should be used for the war against Japan and then divided into four parts, one of which would go to the nations, e.g. Norway, not represented at the Potsdam Conference.

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<sup>1</sup> The United States Delegation estimated that the territory under Polish administration contained 20 per cent of the national wealth of Germany.

The subject was not discussed again until August 1. Meanwhile on July 30 the British and Russian Delegations had submitted memoranda on the subject. The Russian memorandum repeated the claim to a third of the war and merchant fleets, and did not refer to the use of the merchant fleet against Japan. The British memorandum suggested that a share in the war fleet should be given to France, and otherwise repeated Mr. Churchill's proposals, with the addition that account should be taken of the 'satellite' shipping which had passed under Russian control. (Mr. Churchill had already raised this latter question. The British estimate was that the Russians had secured 400,000 tons of Finnish shipping alone. Stalin claimed that they had not taken a single Finnish ship.)

The Americans and Russians would not give France any of the German war fleet, or allocate a quarter of the merchant fleet to other Allied States. The Russians also opposed British proposals—supported by the Americans—to allow the Germans to retain inland and coastal shipping sufficient for the needs of a basic German peace economy. Finally M. Molotov agreed to a proposal by Mr. Bevin for a threefold division on the understanding that the British and United States Governments would give a fair proportion of their share of merchant shipping to France and other Allied countries (including Yugoslavia) and Russia would give a share to Poland.

(iv)

*American proposal for the admission of Italy to the United Nations: Russian proposal for the diplomatic recognition of the 'satellite' governments: British and American refusal of the Russian proposal: acceptance of Mr. Byrnes' 'compromise' suggestion.*

The third main subject of discussion—and of disagreement—at the Potsdam Conference covered, broadly, the affairs of south-east Europe. The Russians wanted to secure the recognition of the puppet governments which they had established in the satellite States; the western Powers, on the other hand, made another attempt to bring about the implementation of the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe. The main issue was the holding of free elections in these countries. The western Powers knew that there was no chance of getting free elections unless British and American observers were present to supervise them, and western press correspondents were allowed to report what was happening in the countries concerned.

The Russians, however, made an attempt to 'short circuit' the whole discussion, and to evade the western demands, by using the American proposals for the admission of Italy to membership of the United Nations Organisation as an occasion for making similar demands on behalf of the satellites. The acceptance of these demands by the western Powers would have implied a recognition of the

governments concerned, and such recognition in turn would have been an acknowledgment that, under the control of their Russian masters, they were already fulfilling the requirements of the Yalta Declaration.

The American proposals with regard to Italy were in themselves disconcerting to the Foreign Office. The British and United States Governments were agreed on raising the question of an Italian peace treaty at the Conference. On July 15 the Foreign Office were told, unexpectedly, that in view of the Italian decision to declare war on Japan, the State Department intended to announce on July 17 that they would recommend the admission of Italy to the World Security Organisation. They asked whether the British Government would support this announcement.

The Foreign Office regarded the American proposal as another instance of a unilateral decision taken on Italy by the Americans without allowing the British Government a chance of stating the case on the other side. They pointed out to the United States Embassy that the Italian intention to declare war on Japan had been known for several weeks, and that we should not be required, in the absence of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, to give an immediate answer to such an important question as the admission of Italy to the United Nations.<sup>1</sup> The American proposals implied a peace treaty with Italy, but we ought not to make any more concessions or promises to Italy about her future status until we were agreed upon the complete treaty. We wanted to conclude this treaty as soon as possible, and regarded it as important that any statement to this effect should be tripartite.

Mr. Byrnes agreed to telegraph to Washington to get the announcement postponed. Nevertheless at the first plenary session of the Conference on July 17 President Truman proposed the admission of Italy to association with the United Nations on the grounds that she had declared war against Japan. Mr. Churchill said that the matter required careful consideration, and that the British people could not forget the conduct of Italy in declaring war on the British Commonwealth at the hour of its greatest danger.

The United States Delegation circulated a memorandum to the Conference summarising their view that the anomalous status of Italy as a 'co-belligerent and unconditionally surrendered enemy' was hampering the efforts of the Allies and of the Italians themselves to improve the economic and political situation of the country. Since the negotiation of a peace treaty would take at least several months,

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<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office said plainly that 'in view of all we had had to put up with from Italy during the war,' we were entitled to more consideration.

the United States Government recommended that the short terms of surrender, and the numerous obsolete clauses of the long terms should be replaced by certain undertakings on the part of the Italian Government.

At a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries on July 18 Mr. Byrnes proposed an immediate discussion of the proposal to admit Italy to the United Nations. M. Molotov asked for delay. Mr. Byrnes therefore did not raise the question again until July 20. He then suggested that in an announcement about Italy the three Powers might also say that they did not favour the admission of Spain as long as she remained under the control of the Franco régime.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden thought that the announcement might include a reference to other neutral countries, e.g. Sweden, Switzerland, and Portugal. He did not think that we should give a promise that certain named States would be admitted to the United Nations. The Great Powers should merely declare themselves in favour of the eventual admission of Italy and of States which had been neutral in the war against Germany, with a provision that Spain would be ineligible as long as she remained under the existing régime. The conclusion of a peace treaty, however, must precede admission in the case of all countries—including Italy—which had been at war with the United Nations. The Foreign Ministers appointed a committee to draft a statement on the lines of the discussion. The Conference discussed the American proposals about Italy at a plenary session on July 20. Stalin then said that the position of Roumania, Finland, Hungary, and Bulgaria should also be considered. President Truman explained that he had mentioned Italy because she had surrendered first, and the terms imposed on her were harder and more binding than those imposed on the other States; he agreed, however, that the Foreign Secretaries might consider the position of the other States.

Mr. Churchill said again that, although the British Commonwealth had suffered most from Italian aggression, we did not oppose the suggestion for preparing a peace treaty with Italy, but the work of preparation might take several months, and might not be completed very long before the opening of a general Peace Conference. The existing Italian Government had no democratic foundations, since it was not based on free elections. Until those elections had been held we should not come to final conclusions with the Italians. Mr. Churchill did not agree with the American plan to replace the Instrument of Surrender by undertakings on the part of the Italian Government. The electorate might repudiate this government, which represented the parties of twenty years ago, and we might have lost

<sup>1</sup> For the discussion of a Russian proposal that the three Powers should recommend the United Nations to break off relations with General Franco's Government, see above, pp. 372-3.



our power under the Instrument of Surrender and be unable to secure our requirements from Italy otherwise than by the exercise of force which we wished to avoid. The undertakings listed by the United States did not cover vital questions such as the future of the Italian fleet and colonies and the payment of reparation. Moreover the Instrument of Surrender had been signed by other nations—including the Dominions—who had suffered great losses at the hands of the Italians. We ought not to go beyond an assent in principle to the preparation of a peace treaty, and a request to the Council of Foreign Ministers to give priority to the matter. Mr. Churchill also referred to the countries mentioned by Stalin. He said that Bulgaria had no claim on British support; she was still armed, and no arrangements had been made for her to pay reparation.

Stalin then said that we wanted to separate the satellite States from Germany, and that all questions of complaint or revenge should be subordinate to this consideration. The spirit of revenge or redress for injuries was a very bad adviser in politics. It was not for him to teach his colleagues in this matter, but 'in politics one should be guided by the calculation of forces.'<sup>1</sup> The practical question was whether we wanted Italy and the other satellites on the side of the United Nations. The Conference agreed to submit to the Foreign Secretaries the question of *interim* arrangements pending the conclusion of peace treaties with Italy and the other satellite States. At a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries on July 21 Mr. Byrnes presented two memoranda dealing with the position of Italy and of the satellite States. The memorandum on the latter stated that the objectives of the three Great Powers were the early achievement of the political independence and economic recovery of the countries in question and the exercise of their right to choose their own forms of government. The Council of Foreign Ministers should therefore undertake the preparation of peace treaties with the four countries and the three Governments should make 'such public declarations on matters of joint concern to those countries as may be appropriate.' Meanwhile they would take steps through the Control Commissions for the progressive transfer of responsibility to the Governments concerned. M. Molotov objected to treating Italy more favourably than the other satellites; he repeated the Russian view that the British and United States Governments ought to recognise the existing governments of Roumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Later at a plenary meeting on July 21 Stalin again stated this Russian view. The Prime Minister and President Truman once more refused the proposal. Stalin then

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Truman agreed with these remarks that peace could not be made on the basis of revenge. The Prime Minister said that he also agreed with them, and that it gave him great pleasure to hear 'these sentiments expressed with such solemnity and authority.'

said that he was unwilling to discuss policy either towards Italy or towards the satellites.<sup>1</sup>

The committee appointed to draft a statement about the admission of neutrals to the United Nations also failed to reach agreement. The Foreign Secretaries therefore considered the question again on the morning of July 24. M. Molotov, however, opposed any draft which did not include a reference to the four satellite countries. Mr. Eden and Mr. Byrnes repeated that the British and United States Governments would not recognise the satellite governments—and especially those of Roumania and Bulgaria—because they were not sufficiently representative. In view of this continued disagreement the question went back to the plenary meetings. At the plenary meeting on July 24 Mr. Churchill spoke even more strongly than Mr. Eden about the governments of Roumania and Bulgaria,<sup>2</sup> and contrasted the position in the satellite States unfavourably with that of Italy. The Russians would not change their refusal to accept any declaration which did not mention the possibility of diplomatic recognition of the four satellites. Stalin described the distinction between Italy and the satellites as 'artificial'; he said that the satellites were 'being treated as lepers' and that in this treatment he saw 'an intention to discredit the Soviet Union and the Soviet army.' Finally Mr. Truman, after holding out for some time, said that he would accept a compromise formula proposed by the Russians that the three Governments agreed 'to consider, each separately, in the immediate future, the question of the establishing of diplomatic relations with Finland, Roumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary.' Mr. Churchill said that this formula would merely be covering over a real difference of view, since Great Britain was not considering a speedy recognition of the four governments.

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<sup>1</sup> Two other questions were discussed in regard to Italy. (i) The Soviet Government raised the question of the future of the Italian colonies. Mr. Churchill said plainly that we had conquered them, but made no territorial claims—'For us there was no Königsberg, no Baltic States, nothing.' Mr. Churchill said that we had considered whether any of the colonies would be suitable for Jewish settlement, but the Jews had not favoured the suggestion. He asked whether the Russians wanted any of the colonies. With Mr. Truman's support, Stalin proposed that the question of the colonies should be referred to the Foreign Secretaries. At their meeting on July 23 Mr. Eden repeated that the British view was only that Italy had no right to recover any of her colonies. The Peace Conference would decide in fact whether any of the colonies should be restored to her, and what form of trusteeship should be applied to those not restored to Italy. Mr. Byrnes supported this view. M. Molotov withdrew his request for immediate discussion, and said that the Soviet Government would raise the matter at the Council of Foreign Secretaries. (ii) The Soviet Government also asked whether Italy was to pay reparation. They suggested deliveries equivalent to 600 million dollars. Mr. Eden and Mr. Byrnes doubted whether Italy could, in fact, pay anything. The British and United States Governments had already advanced more than 500 million dollars in supplies to Italy, and the first charge on Italian exports must be the repayment of these advances. Mr. Bevin, later, took a similar view. M. Molotov did not agree. Nothing further was said about the matter at the Conference.

<sup>2</sup> In speaking of the restrictions put on the British Missions in the two countries, Mr. Churchill repeated, in a slightly different form, his earlier reference to an 'iron curtain.' (See above, p. 520, note 2.)

Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden had left Berlin, and Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin had not arrived when Sir A. Cadogan on July 27 suggested to the Foreign Secretaries a new formula that 'the conclusion of peace treaties with responsible<sup>1</sup> democratic Governments in these (i.e. the satellite) States will enable the three Governments to establish normal diplomatic relations with them and to support their application for admission to the United Nations.' Mr. Byrnes then said that President Truman had not expected opposition to his proposal that the Conference should support the Italian application for admission to the United Nations; he now thought it better to withdraw this proposal, since the Russians would not support it without a reference to the satellite States. M. Molotov, however, wanted to continue the attempt to get an agreed statement. At the plenary meeting on July 28 Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin maintained the previous British attitude; they refused any form of words implying recognition in the near future. Mr. Byrnes, with Mr. Bevin's support, proposed the withdrawal of the project for a declaration about the admission of neutral and ex-enemy States to the United Nations.

Mr. Byrnes, however, changed his mind. He decided to suggest a new formula as part of his general compromise proposals.<sup>2</sup> He told Sir A. Cadogan of his formula, and the British Delegation at their meeting on the morning of July 29 decided to accept it, though they thought that at first it would seem discouraging to the genuinely democratic parties in the countries concerned. On the other hand the formula did not bind us to recognition unless we were satisfied that responsible democratic governments had been established; we could also say that we were free to announce that we had accepted the declaration in the expectation that better facilities would be granted in the countries concerned to the press and for the expression of public opinion. The new formula, as accepted at the plenary session on July 31, ran as follows: 'the three Governments agree to examine, each separately, in the near future, in the light of the conditions then prevailing, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, and Roumania, to the extent possible prior to the conclusion of peace treaties with those countries.'<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet Delegation agreed to a statement that priority should be given to the conclusion of a peace treaty with Italy, and that the three Governments could then support an Italian application for membership of the United Nations. The three Governments announced that they had also asked the Council of Foreign Ministers to

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<sup>1</sup> This word, at the Soviet request, was later changed to 'recognised.'

<sup>2</sup> See below, section (vi) of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> The formula included a statement that the three Governments had no doubt that representatives of the Allied press would now have full freedom to report developments in the countries concerned.

prepare peace treaties with the four satellite States, and that, after the conclusion of these treaties with 'recognised democratic governments' in these States, they would be able to support the applications of the States for membership of the United Nations. Then followed the agreed 'compromise' statement about the 'examination' of the possibility of earlier recognition of the governments. Finally—with a reservation about Spain—the three Governments announced their willingness to support applications from neutral States qualified for admission under the terms of the United Nations Charter.

## (v)

*Anglo-American attempts to secure the fulfilment of the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe: Russian refusal to agree to the supervision of elections: Russian allegations against Greece: President Truman's refusal to discuss the implementation of the Tito-Subasic agreement.*

The Western Powers, while they had been resisting the Russian attempts to secure recognition of their puppet governments in the satellite States, had also been making a direct attempt to bring about the implementation by the three Governments of the terms of the Yalta Declaration. The United States Delegation carried out their intentions<sup>1</sup> in this matter by submitting a memorandum, at the opening of the Conference, pointing out that the obligations assumed under the Yalta Declaration had not been carried out, and proposing that, in order to fulfil these obligations, the three Governments should agree on the immediate reorganisation of the governments of Roumania and Bulgaria in accordance with the terms of the Declaration,<sup>2</sup> and that they should work out procedures for such reorganisation, and for assisting *interim* governments in the holding of elections. This assistance was required at once in the case of Greece and would be required in Roumania and Bulgaria, and possibly elsewhere.

The Soviet Government replied to this memorandum that due order and legal power already existed in Roumania and Bulgaria; that the governments in question were trusted by the population, and were fulfilling their obligations, whereas in Greece there was no proper order or respect for law, and terrorism raged against the 'democratic elements which have borne the principal burden of the fight against German invaders.' The Greeks were also threatening

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 539.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the three Governments 'will jointly assist the people in any European liberated State or former Axis satellite State in Europe . . . to form *interim* governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people.'

Albania and Bulgaria with military action. The Soviet Government therefore proposed the restoration of diplomatic relations between the Allies and Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland, and a recommendation to the Regent of Greece to take immediate measures towards the re-establishment of a democratic government.

The Foreign Office described the Russian memorandum as 'astonishing.' We could not accept the statement that 'due order' existed in Roumania and Bulgaria, and that the governments of these countries were 'trusted by the population.' We had information about the terrorist activities of the communist-controlled secret police and militia in the two countries, and especially in Bulgaria. According to reports which we believed to be approximately accurate, some 40-50,000 people had been murdered by the militia in the past six months, and 2000 others executed after trials as 'war criminals.' The 'offence' of these people was not collaboration with the Germans, but opposition to the present government. The Russian assertion that the two governments were carrying out their obligations was equally untrue. The Bulgarian Government were not making their reparation deliveries to Greece, and, instead of demobilising their army, as they were required to do, appeared to be increasing it. Many of the fascist organisations, e.g. the Iron Guard, had merely transferred their allegiance to the Communists. The Russians would, of course, deny these facts, but, if matters were as satisfactory as they claimed them to be, why did they refuse to allow press correspondents into the countries?

At the Foreign Ministers' meeting on July 20 Mr. Eden objected strongly to the statements in the Soviet memorandum, and especially to the charges (which Mr. Churchill had already denied) against Greece. Mr. Byrnes supported Mr. Eden. M. Molotov continued to argue that the situation was satisfactory in Roumania and Bulgaria, but not in Greece; free elections would be held in Bulgaria on August 26,<sup>1</sup> and would not require Allied supervision. Mr. Eden pointed out that the Bulgarian electors were being asked to vote for a single list, and that this method was not what we understood by democracy or free elections.

On July 21 the United States Delegation submitted another memorandum putting forward three steps of 'immediate urgency in the implementation of the Yalta Declaration': the three Governments should take measures (i) 'to become informed of proposed electoral procedures, and to provide for the observation<sup>2</sup> of elections, in Italy,

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office telegraphed to Mr. Eden, on hearing that the Bulgarian elections were fixed for August 26, that these elections would be wholly unrepresentative, and that we might warn the Bulgarian Government that we could not accept any government elected in the manner proposed. If we said nothing, the Soviet Government would claim that, apart from Great Britain, Bulgaria was the first and only European country to hold free elections.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill had suggested the use of this word rather than 'supervision' (which might seem to imply some kind of control).

Greece, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Hungary'; (ii) to secure the entry of representatives of the press into liberated or former Axis satellite States; (iii) the three Governments should also agree that the Control Commissions in Roumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary should henceforward operate on a tripartite basis.

Mr. Eden supported these proposals at a meeting of Foreign Ministers on July 22. M. Molotov was willing to make suggestions on changes in the Control Commissions. He had no doubt that in the new situation since the end of the war the press would be given more facilities; a public declaration to this effect was unnecessary. He objected to proposals for the observation of elections, though he was willing to consider the other points in the memorandum if the British and United States Delegations would discuss the restoration of diplomatic relations with ex-enemy satellite States. Mr. Eden said that it would be easier to give some form of recognition to the governments established as a result of elections held under the conditions laid down in the American memorandum. Mr. Byrnes stated that the United States Government would recognise any government established under the conditions laid down in the memorandum, but could not recognise the existing Governments. M. Molotov, however, continued to refuse, even in principle, the supervision of elections in the ex-enemy satellite countries by observers nominated by the Great Powers. In view of this refusal no further discussion took place on the question of elections.

Mr. Byrnes, however, during the discussion of his compromise proposals at the plenary session of July 31, suggested that consideration should be given to the proposal for changes in the operation of the Control Commissions. This proposal was accepted. The proposal regarding the press was dealt with generally in the statement regarding the satellite governments. The proposal for the observation of elections was dropped. The British and United States Governments thus gave up hope of securing that these elections would be held on a basis satisfactory to the western democratic Powers.

Mr. Churchill thought it necessary to refute in a written statement the Soviet allegation about Greece. Mr. Eden gave copies of this statement to Mr. Byrnes and M. Molotov on July 23. The most serious factor in the situation, however, was the increasing evidence that the Russians were inciting the Bulgarians, Yugoslavs, and Albanians to enforce their territorial claims by direct action. The Foreign Office had protested both to the Soviet Government and to Marshal Tito about this aggressive attitude towards Greece. They thought that if Marshal Tito, counting on Russian support, invaded Greece, we should have to intervene. Moreover in addition to the Yugoslav,



Bulgarian, and Albanian forces on the Greek frontiers, the Russians had 100,000 or perhaps even 200,000 troops in Bulgaria (Stalin pretended that there were only 30,000), whereas we had in Greece—as the Russians knew—only 40,000, without an armoured division.

The Foreign Office considered that the Russians were trying to defeat our policy of building up a strong and independent Greece and Turkey friendly to Great Britain. If we resisted these plans now, the Russians might give them up; otherwise they would be able to overthrow the Greek Government, revive E.A.M. and ultimately—with the Yugoslavs at Salonika and the Bulgarians in Thrace—establish bases on the Straits and bring Turkey into their sphere of control. The British Delegation therefore suggested on July 30 that the three Governments should issue a statement warning the Governments of south-east Europe against attempts to anticipate the peace settlement by violent and unilateral action.

The Conference did not issue—or discuss—the statement, but the policy of the British Government had been made sufficiently clear, and, on July 31, the Soviet Government agreed that no further discussion should take place on their earlier memorandum about conditions in Greece. Nonetheless the Russians circulated another memorandum on August 1 repeating their demands for a change in the Greek Government. The Conference did not discuss this memorandum. The Foreign Office, however, suggested to Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin that we should state our views on the undesirability of any immediate change, and that we might put these views in a letter to the Regent in which we should say that we wanted to see the full implementation of the Varkiza agreement;<sup>1</sup> that we were concerned at reports of Right Wing excesses, and regarded as important the measures taken by the Government to prevent violations of the agreement by extremists of the Right or Left. Mr. Attlee sent a message to the Regent of Greece on August 1 in these terms.

In addition to the attempt to get the Yalta Declaration fulfilled in the satellite States, the British Delegation also tried to secure a statement that the three Heads of Government required Marshal Tito to carry out the terms of his agreement with M. Subasic.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill had told Stalin that he intended to raise the question of Marshal Tito's claims at the Potsdam Conference, but the discussion on Yugoslav affairs was unsatisfactory and, from the British point of view, slightly absurd. M. Subasic had suggested to the British Government that the three Powers should remind Marshal Tito of his unfulfilled obligations. The British Delegation circulated a memorandum to the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter XVII, section (iii).



Conference referring to the endorsement of the Tito-Subasic agreement of October, 1944, at the Yalta Conference, and stating that 'doubtless owing to war conditions,' the principles set out in the agreement with regard to the establishment of democratic liberties had not been fully carried into effect. The Delegation therefore suggested that the three Heads of Governments should issue a statement that they had recognised the Yugoslav Government on the basis of the agreement, and expected it to be fully implemented in the near future.

The discussion of this memorandum during the plenary session on July 19 came at an unfortunate moment, since it took place after an acrimonious debate on Spain.<sup>1</sup> The first comment was made by Stalin. He said that there was now a legitimate government in Yugoslavia and that the accusations against it should not be discussed without the presence of Yugoslav representatives. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden disagreed with this view. President Truman then asked whether the state of affairs in Yugoslavia was serious enough to make it necessary for the Conference to send for representatives of the Yugoslav Government. Mr. Churchill answered with a short statement of the matters in which the Tito-Subasic agreement had not been fulfilled. He said that Marshal Tito's administration had imposed a strictly controlled party organisation backed by a political police, and that the press was almost as unfree as in fascist countries.

Stalin took up the President's suggestion that the question was not worth pursuing. He went on to say that Mr. Churchill's complaints did not correspond with the information received by the Soviet Government. Mr. Churchill then suggested that there might be some advantage in bringing Marshal Tito and M. Subasic to the Conference. President Truman, however, said that he had come to Berlin for a discussion of world affairs with Stalin and Mr. Churchill, and that he did not want to sit on a court which would hear complaints dealing with the affairs of small States. His purpose was to discuss—as between the three Heads of Governments—matters upon which they could reach agreement; otherwise he would be wasting his time.

Stalin approved of the President's statement. Mr. Churchill said that he thought, from the paper on the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe<sup>2</sup> which they had circulated to the Conference, that the United States Delegation had an interest in the question of Yugoslavia. He agreed that great allowances should be made for Marshal Tito owing to the disturbed state of his country; nevertheless the Yalta Declaration, in which the United States had played a large part, should be renewed and enlarged. The President answered that he had heard from time to time a number of complaints about

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 372.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 555.

Yugoslavia, but he thought it would be best to shew some patience for a while with the Yugoslav Government.

Mr. Churchill then said that, since the British memorandum had not received the support which he had expected, he would not press the matter at the moment, but that the question of Yugoslavia could not be dropped. Stalin agreed that the question should be discussed, but thought that the heads of the Yugoslav Government should be present to answer complaints against them. Mr. Churchill said that he was willing to invite them to the Conference, but that President Truman had objected.

The Americans later told the British Delegation privately that the President's attitude much surprised them, since the State Department had drawn up a brief on the subject in terms even stronger than those used by the Foreign Office. It was, however, impossible now to go back to the original British proposals. The British Delegation therefore brought forward another memorandum calling in a general way on the governments of the south-east European States not to anticipate the peace settlement by violent and unilateral action. The Soviet Government also circulated a memorandum on 'Conditions in the Trieste-Istria district' merely restating the Yugoslav claims with regard to the civil administration in the area of Military Government.

These two papers were brought up for discussion on July 30 at a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries. Mr. Bevin, who had now taken the place of Mr. Eden, introduced the British memorandum; M. Molotov at once referred to the Soviet memorandum which had been drawn up, obviously, to counter the British proposals. Since the British Delegation could not agree to a tripartite discussion of the civil administration of Venezia Giulia on the basis of the Yugoslav claims—as supported by the Russians—the whole question of Yugoslavia was dropped, and discussions on it were not resumed at the Conference.

(vi)

*Mr. Byrnes' 'compromise' proposals on reparation and the question of the Polish western frontier: British attempts to obtain assurances about the holding of free elections in Poland: Russian bargaining over reparation: acceptance of Mr. Byrnes' 'compromise': President Truman's proposal for the unrestricted navigation of inland waterways.*

Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden had left the Potsdam Conference at the stage—familiar to participants in international meetings of this kind—

when disagreement on the main issues was almost complete and before the final bargaining had begun. The terms of a bargain were suggested by Mr. Byrnes. The Americans were likely to have taken the lead anyhow in an offer of more concessions to the Russians. Mr. Churchill has written that he would not have given way to the the Russians on the question of the Polish western frontier.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to say what would have happened if he or his successors had held out in this matter against the Russian demands. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin were in a much weaker position to resist a compromise. They could hardly have begun their administration of affairs by rejecting proposals which the Americans were willing to put forward and the Russians had every reason to accept. Their supporters at home would not have understood a break with Russia; the British Ministers knew—though public opinion in Great Britain was curiously unaware of the hard facts—that they depended on American financial aid to save their country from bankruptcy and a consequent collapse of the Labour programme of costly social measures.<sup>2</sup> Moreover the British officials with the Delegation did not think it advisable to reject the terms of the proposed compromise.

Mr. Byrnes had spoken of these terms to Sir A. Cadogan on the evening of July 27. He mentioned the possibility of a bargain on the basis (i) that the Russians should take what reparation they required from their own zone of reparation, and should also be allowed 1500 million dollars' worth of equipment from the western zones on condition that they supplied over a period of five or six years an equivalent value of coal and foodstuffs from German territory (including the territory transferred to Polish administration) under their control; (ii) that the British and Americans should agree to the immediate transfer to Polish administration of all territory up to the eastern Neisse.

Sir A. Cadogan drew up a note for Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin on their arrival. He mentioned Mr. Byrnes' proposals, and said that the British Delegation recommended their acceptance. The British Delegation discussed the proposals on the morning of July 29. Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that, although the Americans had suggested the eastern Neisse, the Russians and Poles would argue strongly for the western Neisse, and that they would in fact take the frontier to this line. Mr. Bevin suggested that we should find out what the Russians would concede in return for a full recognition of the frontier claim. He proposed that he and Mr. Attlee should see Stalin and M. Molotov before putting forward any proposals. Sir A. Cadogan considered that it might be better first to talk to President Truman. The British records of the Conference do not contain any account of (or references to) a meeting

<sup>1</sup> See above, Introduction, p. liii, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> See above, *ib.*, p. liv, note 1.

on July 29 between the British Ministers and Mr. Truman or the Russians; Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin, however, met the Polish Delegation in the afternoon of July 29 and again on the morning of July 30. At the first meeting the British Ministers said that, if they were asked to support the Polish claims to the western Neisse—about which they had doubts—they were entitled to ask in return for satisfactory assurances about the Polish elections. They also enquired whether the Poles would assist in supplying the rest of Europe. M. Mikolajczyk said that they would have no export surplus from their next harvest, but that in their own interest they would want to sell their coal and industrial products.

On July 30 Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin put a number of questions to M. Bierut about the position of the political parties in Poland, the freedom to be allowed to them during the elections, and the date on which the elections would be held. M. Bierut gave assurances about the freedom of the elections, and said that the date depended on the repatriation of several million Poles still abroad. Mr. Bevin asked whether the Poles could not agree to February, 1946, as the latest date. M. Bierut said that the Polish Government could not accept commitments in the matter, especially from outside. The Polish nation was conscious of its political maturity, and would not accept any foreign guarantee of its political rights.

Mr. Bevin also had a conversation with M. Mikolajczyk on the morning of July 30.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mikolajczyk tried to explain that the independence of Poland was in doubt, but might be secured if the Soviet army and the N.K.V.D. were withdrawn, and free elections held, and if Great Britain and the United States agreed to the frontier claim. M. Mikolajczyk told Sir A. Clark Kerr later that Mr. Bierut's assurances to Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin had been a deliberate attempt to deceive them, and that, on his way back from the meeting, M. Bierut had complained of British 'intolerable interference in the internal affairs of Poland.'

Sir A. Clark Kerr had told Mr. Bevin that we ought to maintain the impression that M. Mikolajczyk had our confidence, since his strength depended on the belief of the Communists that the British Government was wholly behind him. The Foreign Office also telegraphed to Sir A. Cadogan on the evening of July 30 that M. Bierut's promises seemed to be worthless, and that, if it were possible, we ought to withhold agreement on the frontier until the promises had been carried out. Mr. Byrnes, however, brought forward his 'compromise' proposal about the Polish frontier at a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries in the afternoon of July 30, before the British Delegation had formally agreed to it. He said that the acceptance of

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<sup>1</sup> The hour of this conversation is uncertain; it would appear to have preceded the conversation with M. Bierut.

the Polish claim to administer the territory involved a 'sacrifice of the views of the United States Delegation,' and was conditional upon an agreement on other outstanding matters, including reparation. Mr. Bevin explained that the British Delegation had not yet agreed to the American proposals regarding the Polish western frontier or to those regarding reparation.

At a meeting of the British Delegation on the morning of July 31, Mr. Bevin said we had not assented to the Polish claims, and that he hoped to get further assurances about the elections. Mr. Bevin saw M. Mikolajczyk again on the morning of July 31. He told him that the Labour Party held that the Polish frontier should not go beyond the eastern Neisse. If he and Mr. Attlee were to agree to anything beyond this line, they must have satisfactory assurances about internal conditions in Poland. Mr. Bevin gave M. Mikolajczyk a paper for the Polish Delegation containing five points upon which the British Delegation wished to be assured: (i) What measures did the Polish Government propose in order to carry out the decision of the Yalta Conference, which had been accepted by the Polish Provisional Government, that free and unfettered elections should be held as soon as possible on a basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot in which all democratic and anti-Nazi parties could take part? (ii) Would there be freedom of the press in Poland, and would foreign correspondents have complete freedom before and during the elections? (iii) Would there be freedom of religion throughout all territories under Polish administration? (iv) Would the Polish Government issue a public declaration assuring the Poles in the west that they were free to return, with full rights, to Polish territory? (v) Would the Polish Government facilitate the early establishment of a British military air service between London and Warsaw *via* Berlin to secure regular communication with the British Embassy?

Mr. Bevin saw the Polish Delegation at 2.45 p.m. on July 31. He asked for short and direct answers to his questions. M. Bierut said that he had already answered them, Mr. Bevin told him that the answers had been evasive and indefinite. M. Bierut said that the policy of the Polish Government was to hold elections as soon as possible, but that their attitude on the question could not be considered as a concession to the point of view of another government. Mr. Bevin then asked M. Bierut to be frank in the matter. If the Polish Government wanted the British Delegation to accept their proposals, they must give a definite answer to the question 'what will happen to the people who live in the territories transferred to Polish administration?' Could not the Polish Government give an assurance that, subject to the withdrawal of Russian troops, and the speeding up of the repatriation of Poles abroad, they would make every effort to secure free elections early in 1946? M. Bierut said that elections

would be held in accordance with the Yalta Declaration after a provisional settlement of the frontier question and as soon as repatriation had been completed. The Polish Government would try to make a declaration to this effect. Mr. Bevin explained that he had not consulted the American or Soviet Delegations on the matter because he regarded Poland as a sovereign State. He wished, however, to be able to tell the British Parliament that the Polish Delegation had given him an assurance that they would hold elections under the 1921 constitution, if possible, in the early part of 1946. M. Bierut repeated that the whole Polish Delegation wanted elections as soon as was practicable. Mr. Bevin said again that he must be able to mention a date; otherwise the British Government and Parliament would feel that the matter was being put off indefinitely. M. Bierut agreed that a statement might be made that the elections would be held as early as possible, and not later than the early part of 1946.

M. Bierut complained at first that it would be difficult for him to give assurances which might enable foreign correspondents to send unlimited numbers of press correspondents to Poland. Mr. Bevin said that he was asking only for the normal facilities; M. Bierut finally agreed to them. On point (iii) M. Bierut said that freedom of religion already existed in Poland. On point (iv) he said that the Polish Prime Minister had already made a declaration; he undertook to see that another statement was made which would put the intentions of the Polish Government beyond doubt.<sup>1</sup> In view of these assurances the British Ministers informed the Conference at a plenary meeting at 4 p.m. on July 31 that they would accept the Russian and American proposal that the Polish administration should extend to the Oder and western Neisse. Stalin said that the Soviet army, except for troops guarding the lines of communication, would be withdrawn from the territory under Polish administration. The Conference agreed that the final disposition of the territory would be settled at the Peace Conference.

At the meeting of Foreign Ministers on July 30 Mr. Byrnes had put forward his proposal of July 23 about reparation in more detail and had combined it—as part of his general ‘compromise’—with the Russian claim to a share of German assets in the Ruhr. He suggested that the reparation claims of Russia and Poland should be met from the Russian zone, together with (i) 25 per cent of the industrial capital equipment removed from the Ruhr as unnecessary to a peace economy, on condition that the Russians would make available an equivalent value in food, coal, potash, zinc, timber, and clay and oil

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<sup>1</sup> On point (v) M. Bierut had spoken to the Soviet Delegation; the latter had said that the British Delegation should take up the question with them.



products, and (ii) an additional 15 per cent of such capital equipment from the Ruhr which would be transferred without any equivalent.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Bevin then read to the Conference a paper (drawn up after consultation with the Treasury) which the British Delegation was submitting for circulation. This paper stated that, as part of a general settlement, the British Government would agree that the U.S.S.R., in addition to obtaining reparation from their own zone of occupation, should receive 'from the western zones, and particularly from the Ruhr, 10 per cent of such equipment, particularly from the heavy metal industries, as it is decided to remove under an agreed Reparation plan.' The plan would provide for adequate amounts of deliveries of timber and potash from the Russian zone to the Powers (other than the U.S.S.R. and Poland) entitled to reparation.

Mr. Bevin explained that the Russians could choose between 10 per cent from the British and American zones or a higher percentage from the Ruhr alone. The British view was that the supply of goods should be dealt with separately from the payment of reparation, since it was difficult to find an agreed basis of value in exchanging, e.g. machinery for potatoes.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Bevin then read out a second paper on the sources of supply for the Greater Berlin area. This paper repeated the British proposal that each of the zones—including the Greater Berlin area—should draw its supplies as far as was practicable from the area of Germany on which it had drawn before the war. Mr. Bevin also proposed the inclusion in the economic principles governing the treatment of Germany a statement that 'payment for approved imports into Germany shall be a first charge against the proceeds of exports out of current production and out of stocks of goods.'<sup>3</sup> M. Molotov liked Mr. Byrnes' proposals better than those of Mr. Bevin but said that each spoke in terms of percentages of an unknown figure. Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Bevin said that it was impossible as yet to give any figures in terms of dollars or tons. Mr. Bevin—in answer to M. Molotov—said that his proposal meant, not 10 per cent of all the equipment in the western zones, but 10 per cent of the equipment which could be removed. M. Molotov then asked for 25 per cent from the western zones by way of exchange, and 25 per cent without payment. Mr. Byrnes proposed 12½ per cent and 7½ per cent. M. Molotov then lowered his two figures to 20 per cent. Mr. Bevin said that the British

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Byrnes explained that the United States Government would compensate the British Government in respect of any excess of machinery drawn from the British zone.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Attlee had suggested an exchange with the Russians, but the British Delegation pointed out to him that this method would lead to disputes about the value of each consignment in each direction.

<sup>3</sup> By 'approved' Mr. Bevin meant 'approved by the Allied Control Council.' (M. Molotov had put forward a suggestion to this effect on July 23).



Delegation had not yet agreed to Mr. Byrnes' compromise about the Polish frontier or about reparation, but that the figures of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent were very favourable to Russia.

The British Delegation considered the position on the morning of July 31. Mr. Bevin thought that the Russians would try first for an absolute figure of deliveries from the western zones, and then for a 10 per cent of deliveries without exchange, and another 10 per cent with exchange. Sir D. Waley<sup>1</sup> thought that the most serious feature in Mr. Byrnes' plan was that the Americans had now given up hope of collaborating with the Russians in the administration of Germany as a single economic unit; they were taking the defeatist view that the Russian zone would be administered as a separate unit with lower standards of living and few facilities for the interchange of goods with the rest of Germany. Mr. Bevin saw no practical advantage in trying to get the Americans to change the basis of their plan. They clearly wanted to make the best bargain they could and to end the discussion. We ought therefore to accept their plan, and to raise the question of treating Germany as an economic unit in separate discussions on the exchange of supplies between the various zones. Sir D. Waley agreed with this suggestion, and the meeting decided to offer the Russians a figure of 10 per cent from the two western zones with exchanges, and 10 per cent without exchanges.

Mr. Byrnes put forward his figures of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent at the plenary meeting of the Conference on July 31. The Soviet Delegation asked for 15 per cent by exchange, and 10 per cent without payment, together with 500 million dollars' worth of shares in industrial and transport undertakings in the western zones, 30 per cent of German foreign investments and 30 per cent of German gold now at the disposal of the Allies. After Mr. Byrnes had refused this additional claim, Stalin said that it might be necessary to raise the percentages. President Truman then offered 15 and 10 per cent if the Russians withdrew their additional claim. Mr. Bevin said that we should find it difficult to meet the claims of other Allies, e.g. France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, if we accepted the Russian figures. He suggested as a compromise  $12\frac{1}{2}$  and 10 per cent. Stalin asked why the British Delegation would not accept the Russian figures although the United States had accepted them. Mr. Bevin said that most of the equipment would be taken from the British zone. We wanted little for ourselves, but would have to satisfy the claims of our Allies. Stalin said that France did not deserve to obtain much in reparation. She had signed an armistice with Germany, and had broken the common Allied front. Stalin estimated that 150 enemy divisions had been provided

<sup>1</sup> Sir D. Waley was the senior Treasury representative on the British Delegation.

or supplied from France.<sup>1</sup> Finally, after he had tried to get the figures of  $17\frac{1}{2}$  and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent Mr. Bevin accepted 15 and 10 per cent.

The Conference had now reached agreement on the main proposals in Mr. Byrnes' 'compromise plan.' They decided that it was no longer necessary to include in the list of 'economic principles' any statement that each zone should draw its supplies from the area of Germany on which it had drawn them before the war. Mr. Byrnes thought that a reference to priorities was also unnecessary, but Mr. Bevin said he was still concerned to secure that payments for approved imports into Germany should be a first charge against the proceeds of exports. The Conference finally agreed to a statement to this effect, though it was not to apply to the equipment and products included in the allocations to the U.S.S.R. from the western zones.

With the conclusion of this somewhat unreal bargaining over figures the Conference had reached the end of its main business. One subject of discussion, however, remains to be recorded. The Conference had failed to agree on the Russian demands with regards to the Straits;<sup>2</sup> Mr. Byrnes had not attempted to suggest a compromise in the matter. These demands went beyond the revision of the Montreux Convention which Mr. Churchill, at the Teheran Conference, had promised to support. The Russians asked that the Convention should be abrogated; that the determination of the régime in the Straits should be settled by Turkey and the U.S.S.R.; and that, in addition to Turkish military bases, the U.S.S.R. should establish bases in the Straits. Mr. Churchill pointed out that these proposals were entirely new, and that Turkey was most unlikely to accept them. He was unwilling to advise their acceptance. President Truman thought that the Straits should become a free waterway under the guarantee of the Great Powers.

The Russians would not accept this plan. The President, however, made it the occasion for a much wider proposal. He said on July 23 that, after much study, he had come to the conclusion that all the wars in the last 200 years had originated in the areas bounded by the Baltic and the Mediterranean, the eastern border of France, and the western border of Russia.<sup>3</sup> In the last two years the peace of the world had been overturned first by Austria and then by Germany. The present (Potsdam) Conference and the coming Peace Conference should see that this did not happen again. To a great extent such a

<sup>1</sup> The British Ministers did not make the obvious rejoinder to the Russians, or repeat Mr. Churchill's comment (see above, p. 489, note 2) to an earlier disparaging remark by Stalin about France.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter XVI, section (iii).

<sup>3</sup> The President obviously was referring only to European wars, though even with this limitation, the statement is inaccurate.

purpose could be accomplished by securing 'freedom for the passage of goods and intercourse' in the area concerned as in the United States. The President then read out a paper entitled 'Free and Unrestricted Navigation of International Inland Waterways.' The President said that his proposals should apply to the Kiel Canal and the Straits.

Mr. Truman did not allow these proposals to drop out of sight after the Conference had failed to reach agreement over the Straits. On July 31 he repeated his view that his paper offered a suggestion for the proper control of the inland waterways of central Europe which had been the hotbed (*sic*) of war for the last 200 years. M. Molotov pointed out that it would be impossible to consider the suggestion without the advice of experts familiar with the facts about the waterways. The President then proposed that the question should be submitted to the Council of Foreign Ministers. The British and Soviet Delegations agreed with this proposal, and accepted a short reference to it in the Protocol of the Conference. The reference did not fully satisfy the President. He asked that the matter should also be mentioned in the communiqué issued by the Conference. He wanted to say, on his return to the United States, that he had not entered into any secret agreements and that all the effective decisions of the Conference were recorded in the communiqué. Stalin explained that at previous Conferences the Protocol had recorded all agreed decisions, and that the communiqué contained only those decisions on matters of political principle which were of general interest. Formal decisions—such as the reference of the President's proposal to the Council of Foreign Ministers—should not be included in the communiqué, but were not 'secret agreements.' Mr. Truman accepted this decision on the understanding that he would be free to disclose the fact that his proposal had been submitted to the Council of Foreign Ministers. On August 9 in a broadcast statement on the Conference, the President repeated his view that one of the persistent causes of war in Europe during the past two centuries had been selfish control of inland waterways. He then mentioned his proposal and said that the United States Government would press for its adoption at the Council of Foreign Ministers.

The sequence of events after the Potsdam Conference belongs to a history of the post-war years. A historian of British diplomacy during the war cannot go beyond mentioning three judgments passed shortly after the Conference, with its unfinished business and its compromises, had come to an end. Mr. Attlee, who alone among British Ministers saw the Conference from beginning to end, sent a personal message after its conclusion to the Prime Ministers of the Dominions. The last words of his message were: 'In general, I feel that we have

made considerable progress towards a better understanding between the three Governments, and that the decisions reached will provide a firm basis for a further advance.' Mr. Bevin, speaking in the House of Commons on August 20, 1945, was less certain. He said frankly that in Hungary, Roumania, and Bulgaria, 'the impression we get from recent developments is that one kind of totalitarianism is being replaced by another.' During this same debate, Mr. Churchill gave a sombre description of what was happening in the areas under Russian control, and a warning against the delusion that 'the most serious questions' at the Conference were 'brought to good solutions.'

## Notes to Chapter XXXI

### (i)

*The application of 'unconditional surrender' to Japan: the Cairo declaration of December 1, 1943: the Potsdam declaration: the Japanese surrender.*

While China was drifting into civil war, Japan in the latter part of 1944 was faced with the total collapse of her grandiose plan for the domination of East Asia. The Japanese had already lost the initiative before their ultimate defeat was rendered certain by the success of the Allied landings in Normandy.<sup>1</sup> The formula of unconditional surrender covered Japan, and in a declaration issued on December 1, 1943, after the Cairo meeting with General Chiang Kai-shek, the three Great Allies (Great Britain, the United States and China) had announced their intention of punishing as well as restraining the aggression of Japan. They had no territorial aims of their own; their purpose was that Japan should be 'stripped of all the islands in the Pacific' which she had 'seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914'; that she should be compelled to restore to China all the territories, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, 'stolen from the Chinese.'

The Allies envisaged that 'serious and prolonged operations' would be necessary to procure the unconditional surrender of Japan. In the course of the year 1944, however, the Foreign Office, and the British military authorities in south-east Asia, came to the view that the Allied pronouncements on Japan were likely to prolong a suicidal resistance, and that it was desirable to qualify, though not to get rid of the demand for unconditional surrender. The Prime Minister was reported to have summed up the matter at the second Quebec Conference in August, 1944,<sup>2</sup> by saying that

<sup>1</sup> It is possible to argue, though the question falls outside the scope of this *History*, that a different Japanese strategy in 1942—i.e. an attack on the U.S.S.R. and an attempt to cut off Allied access through the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf—might have had a decisive influence upon the course of the war in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> The Chiefs of Staff estimated at this time that victory over Japan would follow within eighteen months of the end of the war with Germany.

the Japanese must be put into a position in which they could inflict neither their vices nor their virtues upon their fellowmen.<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office thought that the Allies might assure the Japanese that they would take measures to relieve distress in Japan after the war, and that they wanted to secure a reasonable standard of living for the Japanese people. President Truman made a statement on these lines on May 8, 1945. Some three weeks later Mr. Grew<sup>2</sup> told Sir G. Sansom that the State Department had been considering another statement to reassure the responsible civilian leaders in Japan that unconditional surrender did not mean the extermination of the Japanese people. The Foreign Office heard later that the Americans or Russians were likely to raise the matter at the Potsdam Conference. They agreed as before that unqualified insistence on unconditional surrender was helping to prolong Japanese resistance. They thought, however, that any initiative in modifying the phrase should come from the Americans or the Russians, and that the Chinese should also be consulted.<sup>3</sup>

At the Potsdam Conference Mr. Byrnes gave to Mr. Churchill a draft proclamation to the Japanese people which the United States Government proposed to issue in the names of the three Heads of Governments at war with Japan. The British Delegation agreed with the general terms of the draft, but thought that it was unrealistic to address the Japanese people. There was no organised civilian group in Japan which could overthrow the government; the mass of the people were loyal to the Emperor and obedient to a lawfully constituted administration. Mr. Churchill therefore suggested amendments to change the document to an open communication to the Japanese Government. The President accepted these amendments, and the document was published on July 26. The declaration gave a warning of the overwhelming power of the Allies and called upon the Japanese Government to proclaim at once the unconditional surrender of

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<sup>1</sup> In September, 1944, the Foreign Office received through the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs an 'unofficial' Japanese overture with regard to a compromise peace. After informing the United States and Soviet Governments the Foreign Office told the Swedish Minister that the British Government was unwilling to reply to indirect Japanese approaches. An unofficial approach was also made to the United States Legation in Stockholm in May, 1945. Even if they had not decided as a matter of policy to reject such unofficial approaches, the Western Powers would have found some difficulty in answering them because they had not themselves decided upon the treatment of Japan except in the matter of the dissolution of the Japanese Empire. Stalin told Mr. Churchill on July 17 that, before leaving Moscow, he had received, through the Japanese Ambassador, a message from the Emperor that the Japanese could not accept unconditional surrender, but might be prepared to compromise with regard to other terms. The Soviet Government had replied that, as the Japanese message was only in general terms, they could take no action about it.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Grew had been United States Ambassador at Tokyo and was at this time Under-Secretary of State. Sir G. Sansom, who had served for many years in Japan, was adviser on Japanese affairs to the British Ambassador at Washington.

<sup>3</sup> One important point was that the Japanese seemed to fear that the Allies might humiliate them by requiring the Emperor's deposition. The Foreign Office thought that the Japanese might have interpreted as a statement of official policy a suggestion made by the American delegates at a meeting of the Institute of Pacific Relations in January, 1945, that the Emperor and his family should be excluded from the throne. Mr. Grew's proposed statement included an assurance that the Allies did not intend to impose any form of government on the Japanese against their will. This assurance implied that we should not interfere with the constitutional position of the Emperor.

all their forces. It repeated the territorial terms of the Cairo declaration, and stated that the Allies would destroy the war-making power of Japan. On the other hand the Allies, while insisting upon the establishment of democratic liberties in Japan, made no reference to the status of the Emperor; they promised a reasonable economic future for Japan, and the withdrawal of the Allied occupying forces after a peacefully inclined and responsible government had been established.

There was no reference to the atomic bomb in the Anglo-American discussions at Potsdam over the proposed declaration. The success of the experimental detonation of the bomb was known to the United States and British Governments on July 16; the warning to Japan was put in the strongest terms in the hope of producing a surrender before the bomb was used. The Japanese made no offer of surrender. On August 6 an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima; a second was dropped on Nagasaki three days later.<sup>1</sup> On August 10 the Japanese News Agency issued an offer of surrender on the terms of the Potsdam declaration, but with the understanding that the declaration 'did not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of [the Emperor] as a sovereign ruler.' The Foreign Office telegraphed urgently to the United States, Chinese, and Soviet Governments for their views on this statement, and particularly on the condition about the Emperor. Owing to the difficulties of administering Japan, the Foreign Office were inclined, provided that the United States Government agreed, to allow the Emperor to remain as a symbol, though they could not accept the term 'prerogatives' until it was more closely defined. If the Allies insisted on the disappearance of the Emperor, the Japanese might continue a suicidal resistance. Mr. Bevin told Mr. Winant that he would not discuss the matter with other Governments until he was certain that Great Britain and the United States were in accord.<sup>2</sup>

On the evening of August 10 Mr. Winant sent to Mr. Attlee a message from Mr. Byrnes that the United States Government proposed to reply that the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill has stated (VI, 553) that there was no Anglo-American discussion whether the bomb should or should not be used. Mr. Churchill's own view, which was shared by the Americans, was that the use of the bomb in bringing the war against Japan to a rapid end would in fact mean a smaller expenditure of lives—Japanese as well as American and British. I have not found any discussion of the matter in any papers in the Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> I have not dealt here with the discussions in the Foreign Office and other Departments in London regarding the mode of occupation and control, and the treatment of Japan generally after the war. The Foreign Office agreed with a statement of objectives communicated informally to them by the State Department on May 28, 1945, but thought that the Americans had not fully realised the great difficulties in the way of a total protracted occupation of Japan and the assumption of all the functions of government. The Foreign Office accepted Sir G. Sansom's views (i) that instead of suspending—as the Americans proposed—the constitutional powers of the Emperor, the Allies should work through them or whatever State administration they might find in being in Japan, and (ii) that the control of Japanese imports and exports and the occupation of a few easily held key points would be sufficient to secure compliance with the Allied demands. Sir G. Sansom pointed out that more than half of the Japanese population of 76 millions was urban, and that, if this urban population were unemployed and starving, the Allies could not expect the evolution of a democratic type of government. He also pointed out that the Japanese people would not respond to indoctrination by foreigners: 'many Japanese would . . . prefer the horrors of war to the ministration of a kind of U.N.R.R.A. operating in the cultural field.'



the State would be subject to that of the Supreme Allied Commander; that the Emperor would be required to sign the surrender terms, and that the ultimate form of government of Japan should be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin told Mr. Winant at midnight on August 10-11 that they agreed in principle with the American proposal but thought it unwise to ask the Emperor to sign the surrender terms. They suggested as a formula: 'The Emperor shall authorise and ensure the signature by the Government of Japan and the Japanese General Headquarters of the Surrender Terms, etc.'

Meanwhile on the morning of August 10 the Japanese Government had made a communication to the Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo<sup>1</sup> on the lines of the News Agency announcement. At midnight on August 10-11 M. Molotov showed this communication to Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman. While they were discussing the matter a member of Mr. Harriman's staff arrived with a telegram expressing the hope that the Soviet Government would reply in the same terms as the United States Government. M. Molotov said that he would consult the Soviet Government. At 1.45 a.m. he summoned Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman again. He then read the Soviet answer. This answer began by accepting the draft reply, and stated that the Allied Powers would have to agree upon a candidate or candidates representing the Allied High Command to whom the Emperor and the Japanese Government would be subject. Mr. Harriman objected that this proposal meant a veto on American freedom of action. M. Molotov replied that this was not so. Sir A. Clark Kerr said that through force of circumstances the Supreme Command would fall to the Americans, and that the British Government would accept their choice. Mr. Harriman then made it clear that the Americans intended to appoint the Supreme Commander. After further argument M. Molotov asked why, in any case, Marshal Vassilevsky as well as General MacArthur should not accept the surrender. Mr. Harriman then pointed out that the United States had been at war with Japan for nearly four years, and Russia for two days. At 3 a.m. M. Molotov's secretary telephoned to the Ambassadors that Stalin had consented to substitute for M. Molotov's words 'agree upon a candidate or candidates' the words 'consult upon a candidate.'

President Truman telegraphed to Mr. Attlee on August 12 that he had proposed General MacArthur as Supreme Allied Commander to receive and carry into effect the Japanese surrender. Mr. Attlee accepted this proposal and designated Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser to accompany General MacArthur. The Japanese Government replied on August 14 to the communication made on August 11 by the United States Government on behalf of the four Allied Powers. The Allied Powers regarded the reply as adequate, and the Japanese surrender took place on August 15.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Government informed the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow on August 8 that the U.S.S.R. would enter the war against Japan on August 9. The Soviet Ambassador had not left Tokyo on August 10.

<sup>2</sup> I have not dealt with the correspondence concerning the detailed terms or signature of the Act of Surrender.



## (ii)

*The trial and punishment of German war criminals.*

The three Heads of Governments at the Teheran Conference issued a declaration on German atrocities stating that the Allied Governments would send the individuals responsible for these crimes to be tried and punished in the countries where they had committed their crimes. Major criminals, such as the leading members of the German Government, whose acts had no single geographical location, would be punished by joint action on the part of the Allied Governments. Nothing more was said in the declaration about the form which this joint action would take. The British Government inclined at this time to a legal form of trial, while the Russians and Americans appeared to favour the summary execution of Hitler and his associates.

No agreement was reached on this question before the Yalta Conference. The Conference referred the matter to later meetings of the Foreign Secretaries, but no meetings took place before the assembling of the San Francisco Conference. The United States Government, however, sent Judge Rosenman to London to discuss the question with the Lord Chancellor (Lord Simon). Lord Simon submitted to the War Cabinet a memorandum on the discussions. The War Cabinet discussed this memorandum on April 12, 1945. They agreed with the American view that an inter-Allied Criminal Court for the trial of war criminals was unsuitable, and that the appropriate tribunal should be military. They had also changed their view about the treatment of major criminals. They proposed summary execution for them, whereas the Americans were in favour of a formal trial or judicial enquiry. The War Cabinet asked Lord Simon to put their views to Judge Rosenman and to prepare for communication to the United States Government a statement of their objections to a formal trial for the major war criminals.

While this statement was in preparation the Foreign Office heard that M. Molotov was going to San Francisco. They thought that he might raise the question of war criminals (which was becoming urgent in view of the rapid German collapse). Lord Simon and the Attorney-General therefore gave Sir A. Cadogan a short paper on the British views. The paper assumed that the major criminals would be executed. The question whether they should or should not be tried by a tribunal depended on the nature of the charge against them. In the case of Hitler, for example, 'it is the totality of his offences against the international standard which civilised countries try to observe which makes him the guilty man that he is.' If he were formally indicted in a court, the trial would be long and elaborate. He would have to be given all the rights properly conceded to an accused person. He must be defended, if he so wished, by counsel, and must be allowed to call relevant evidence. His defence could not be shut down or limited because it took a very long time.

There would certainly be comment that the trial was a 'put-up' job to justify a punishment upon which the Allies were already decided. Hitler and his associates would use all the opportunities which a long trial would

offer them, and if, in the complicated and novel procedure which would have to be adopted, they scored some unexpected point, the trial might be denounced as a farce. Hitler's acts of aggression leading up to and during the war could not be described as war crimes in the ordinary sense; it was not even clear whether they were crimes under international law. They would have to be included in the charge, and the accused might argue that this part of the indictment should be struck out. It might well be thought that these acts ought to be regarded as crimes under international law, but the accused could argue from 'what has happened in the past and what has been done by various countries in declaring war which resulted in acquiring new territory, which certainly were not regarded at the time as crimes against international law.'

Lord Simon suggested that a document should be drawn up giving the reasoned basis for the punishment of the persons concerned. Such a document might be served upon each of the principal criminals on an agreed list. Each should be told that, if he wished to make an answer, he must do so in writing within, say, fourteen days, and that his answer would be submitted to the Government in whose charge he was, and that the Allies would thereafter promulgate their decision upon his case. The procedure would not be in the nature of a trial, and would not involve an attempt to set up a judicial tribunal, but it would 'give the accused the opportunity of putting forward what he wished to say, and might conceivably, in some cases, influence the decision.'

Sir A. Cadogan telegraphed from Washington on April 22 that he had shown Lord Simon's paper (excluding his personal suggestion about procedure) to Judge Rosenman, but that President Truman was strongly of opinion that we could not dispose of the major criminals by political decision and without some form of judicial process. On May 2 Sir A. Cadogan telegraphed that Mr. Stettinius proposed to hold a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries during the next afternoon to consider a short report from Judge Rosenman. Mr. Eden therefore wanted to know the views of the War Cabinet.

The War Cabinet thought that, in spite of the difficulties of procedure in a State trial of the major criminals,<sup>1</sup> we should not continue to oppose the wishes of the Americans and the Russians or give the impression that we were trying to deny the individuals charged an opportunity of answering the charges against them; we should accept the American and Russian view in principle, but leave them to draw up a workable procedure before finally committing ourselves. The War Cabinet also agreed that war criminals whose offences were committed on Allied territory should be handed over for trial to the Government concerned, and that those whose offences were committed on enemy territory should be dealt with by military courts under a manual of guidance agreed by the Allies. We should support a proposal made by Judge Rosenman for dealing with criminals such as Kramer, the Commandant at Belsen, and the local heads of the Gestapo throughout Germany by establishing in a single trial that the Gestapo was a criminal conspiracy. We could then deal with individuals on proof of their membership of this conspiracy.

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<sup>1</sup> Some, including Hitler, Goebbels, and Mussolini, were already dead.

Discussions for establishing an International Tribunal to try the major criminals were opened in London after the San Francisco Conference, but were not concluded before the opening of the Potsdam Conference. The Russians at Potsdam wanted the Conference to name a list of these major criminals. The British and American Delegations thought it better not to mention any names. The Russians argued that a list was necessary to satisfy public opinion in the Allied countries, and also to make it clear that some industrialists were to be tried. Finally the Russians wished to remove any uncertainty about Hess. Mr. Bevin said that he could give a definite undertaking that Hess would be handed over for trial without delay, but Stalin still considered it desirable to leave no doubt in the matter. President Truman told the Conference that Mr. Justice Jackson, the United States representative on the War Crimes Commission, had said to him that the publication of names would handicap the work of the Commission and that the trials would begin, if possible, within thirty days. Stalin then withdrew his demand on condition that the first list of war criminals to be tried would be published within thirty days.



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